

John McCone

As DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE 1961-1965



DAVID ROBARGE

CIA HISTORY STAFF



CENTER for the STUDY of INTELLIGENCE

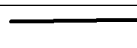
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John McCone

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William E. Colby As Director of Central Intelligence, 1973–1976, by Harold P. Ford, 1993.

Richard Helms As Director of Central Intelligence, 1966–1973, by Robert M. Hathaway and Russell Jack Smith, 1993.

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To support these activities, CSI publishes *Studies in Intelligence* and books and monographs addressing historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of the intelligence profession. It also administers the CIA Museum and maintains the Agency's Historical Intelligence Collection.

Readers wishing to have copies of this book or other CSI publications may call [redacted] Requests may also be sent via Lotus Notes to [redacted]

The material on this page is unclassified.

John McCone
As
Director of
Central Intelligence
1961–1965

David Robarge



Center for the Study of Intelligence

Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.
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Foreword (U)

John A. McCone was the sixth Director of Central Intelligence, serving from 1961 to 1965 during some of the most tumultuous events in American history. The United States narrowly averted nuclear war with the Soviet Union when the Soviets tried to put offensive ballistic missiles into Cuba. An incumbent president fell to an assassin's bullet. The United States committed itself to defending the Republic of Vietnam against communist aggression and escalated its military support to that beleaguered country. (U)

The Intelligence Community, of which McCone was titular head, saw some of its bitterest bureaucratic battles over control of the National Reconnaissance Office. Within CIA, he faced strong resistance to bureaucratic changes. Those included imposing greater accountability over covert actions, refocusing on analysis, and—perhaps his most far-reaching and enduring achievement—creating an independent directorate responsible for science and technology, which he thought were underutilized as intelligence sources and tools. (U)

On a superficial level McCone was an unlikely DCI. He had built his career in the private sector and had limited experience with intelligence. He was a conservative Republican in a liberal Democratic administration. He appreciated and promoted science and technology in an intelligence organization dominated by the culture of clandestine operations. (U)

Yet this unlikely DCI was one of the best leaders and managers CIA—and the Intelligence Community—ever had. One can make a persuasive argument that he *was* the best. The problems with which he dealt as DCI often appeared insoluble, but he was an extraordinarily successful engineer and businessman with a reputation as a no-nonsense executive unafraid to make tough decisions, and his list of accomplishments as DCI is long. (U)

Writing historical biography well is an art form, and McCone has found a worthy biographer in Dr. David Robarge. Using classified and unclassified sources, Dr. Robarge has written an authoritative and exhaustive study that portrays and assesses McCone's leadership qualities, his managerial philosophy and technique, and his response to the challenges of running a mammoth intelligence bureaucracy. In so doing, Dr. Robarge draws insights as valid for the problems facing CIA's current leaders as they were when Director McCone left the DCI's seventh floor office nearly 40 years ago. (U)

Dr. Robarge's study of McCone will be the standard work for many years to come and establishes the criteria for scholarship on one of the key figures in American intelligence, the historiography of which will be immeasurably enriched when the Agency eventually declassifies and releases *John McCone As Director of Central Intelligence, 1961–1965* to the public. (U)

Scott A. Koch
Chief Historian (2002–2004)

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Acknowledgements (U)

I am very grateful to many colleagues inside and outside CIA for thoroughly reviewing several drafts of this book. Their substantive knowledge and literary abilities kept many factual errors, unclear interpretations, and awkward phrases from slipping through. I especially would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their invaluable comments and suggestions:

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] Special thanks to the late Richard Helms, who spent many hours offering his unique insights on John McCone's directorship. I also would like to thank [redacted] of the Directorate of Operations for their assistance in retrieving records on many obscure activities; [redacted] and [redacted] of the CIA Library for research help; and the production staffs at the Center for the Study of Intelligence—[redacted]—and the staff of Imaging and Publishing Support—especially [redacted]—for their painstaking work in transforming a large manuscript into this book. The cover design is the fine work of [redacted] of Imaging and Publishing Support. (U)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms (U)

ACDA	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency	FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission	FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
AF	Africa Division, Directorate of Plans	FE	Far East Division, DDP
AID	Agency for International Development	FI	Foreign intelligence
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)	FMSAC	Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center
BNE	Board of National Estimates	FY	Fiscal Year
CA	Covert action	GRU	Soviet military intelligence service
CAS	Controlled American Source (cover name for CIA)	HUMINT	Human source intelligence
CCF	Congress for Cultural Freedom	ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile
CGS	Collection Guidance Staff	IG	Inspector General
CI	Counterintelligence	INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Depart- ment of State
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific	IRBM	Intermediate-range ballistic missile
COIN	Counterinsurgency	JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
COMINT	Communications intelligence	KGB	Soviet foreign intelligence service
COS	Chief of station	MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence	MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
DCID	Director of Central Intelligence Directive	MI-5	British counterintelligence and security service
DDCI	Deputy Director of Central Intelligence	MI-6	British foreign intelligence service
DDI	Deputy Director for Intelligence	MRBM	Medium-range ballistic missile
DDP	Deputy Director for Plans or Directorate of Plans	NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
DDR	Deputy Director for Research	NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
DDS	Deputy Director for Support	NIPE	National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff
DDS&T	Deputy Director for Science and Technology	NPIC	National Photographic Interpretation Center
DI	Directorate of Intelligence	NRO	National Reconnaissance Office
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency	NRP	National Reconnaissance Program
DNRO	Director, National Reconnaissance Office	NSA	National Security Agency
DO	Directorate of Operations	NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
DR	Directorate of Research	NSC	National Security Council
DS	Directorate of Support	NSCID	National Security Council Intelligence Directive
DS&T	Directorate of Science and Technology	OAS	Organization of American States
EE	Eastern Europe Division, DDP	OC	Office of Communications
ELINT	Electronic intelligence	OCA	Office of Congressional Affairs
ExComm	Executive Committee, National Security Council		

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OCI	Office of Current Intelligence
ODCI	Office of the DCI
ODDI	Office of the DDI
OGC	Office of the General Counsel
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
ONE	Office of National Estimates
ORR	Office of Research and Reports
OSI	Office of Scientific Intelligence
<i>PDB</i>	<i>President's Daily Brief</i>
PFIAB	President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
<i>PICL</i>	<i>President's Intelligence Checklist</i>
PRC	People's Republic of China
RFE	Radio Free Europe
ROC	Republic of China
RL	Radio Liberty
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAM	Surface-to-air missile
SGA	Special Group Augmented
SGC	Special Group Counterinsurgency
SIGINT	Signals intelligence
SNIE	Special National Intelligence Estimate
SR	Soviet Russia Division, DDP
TSD	Technical Services Division
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIB	United States Intelligence Board
WE	Western Europe Division, DDP
WH	Western Hemisphere Division, DDP

Abbreviations used in bibliographic references in footnotes:

CMS Files	Community Management Staff Files
CSHP	Clandestine Services Historical Paper
<i>DH</i>	<i>Diplomatic History</i>
EA Files	East Asia Division (DDP) Files
ER Files	Executive Registry Files
ERWI	Chief Information Officer/Electronic Records WEB Interface
<i>FRUS</i>	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
HIC	Historical Intelligence Collection, CIA Library
HS Files	History Staff Files
<i>I&NS</i>	<i>Intelligence and National Security</i>
<i>IJIC</i>	<i>International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence</i>
ICS Files	Intelligence Community Staff Files
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of American History</i>
MORI	Chief Information Officer/Information Management Staff, Management of Released Information
NFAC Files	National Foreign Assessment Center Files
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OIM Files	Office of Information Management Files
PSQ	Presidential Studies Quarterly
<i>Studies</i>	<i>Studies in Intelligence</i>

Prominent Persons Mentioned in Text (U)

Persons listed are identified by the positions they held when DCI McCone dealt with them.

Allende de Gossens, Salvadore, leader of socialist party in Chile

Amory, Robert, Deputy Director for Intelligence until March 1962

Angleton, James J., Chief, Counterintelligence Staff, DDP

Artime, Manuel, head of anti-Castro expatriate group Movement to Recover the Revolution (MRR)

Ball, George, Undersecretary of State

Bannerman, Robert L., Director, Office of Security, June 1963–July 1964

Bissell, Richard M., Deputy Director for Plans until February 1962

Blake, Gordon (Lt. Gen.), Director, National Security Agency beginning July 1962

Bross, John A., Comptroller, April 1962–September 1963, then Deputy to DCI for National Intelligence Programs Evaluation

Bundy, McGeorge, Presidential National Security Adviser, member of Special Group and 303 Committee

Bundy, William P., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs beginning March 1964

Cabell, Charles P. (Gen.), Deputy Director of Central Intelligence until January 1962

Carroll, Joseph F. (Gen.), Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Carter, Marshall S. (Lt. Gen.), Deputy Director of Central Intelligence beginning April 1962

Charyk, Joseph V., Director, National Reconnaissance Office, May 1962–March 1963

Chiang Ching-kuo, Minister of Defense, Republic of China, and son of Chiang Kai-shek

Chiang Kai-shek, President of the Republic of China

Chretien, Paul M., Director of Public Affairs beginning November 1963

Clifford, Clark, Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board after April 1963

Cline, Ray S., Deputy Director for Intelligence beginning April 1962

Colby, William E., Chief, Far East Division, DDP, beginning January 1963

Cottrell, Sterling J., Department of State official, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs and head of Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs

Coyne, J. Patrick, Executive Secretary, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board

Donovan, James B., lawyer involved in negotiations for release of Bay of Pigs prisoners

Dulles, Allen W., McCone's predecessor as DCI

Duong Van Minh ("Big Minh") (Lt. Gen.), leader of November 1963 coup against President Diem of South Vietnam

Earman, John S., DCI Executive Assistant until May 1962, then Inspector General

Edwards, Sheffield, Director, Office of Security until June 1963

Elder, Walter W., McCone's Executive Assistant after May 1962

Felt, Harry D. (Adm.), Commander in Chief, Pacific until June 1964

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FitzGerald, Desmond, Chief, Far East Division, DDP, until December 1962, then Chief, Special Affairs Staff, DDP

Forrestal, Michael, member of National Security Council staff

Foster, William C., Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Fubini, Eugene, Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

Galbraith, John Kenneth, Ambassador to India until July 1963

Gilpatric, Roswell, Deputy Secretary of Defense until January 1964; member of Special Group and 303 Committee

Goleniewski, Michal, Polish intelligence officer and CIA source during 1958-61

Golitsyn, Anatoliy, KGB officer who defected to US in December 1961; Angleton's main source about Soviet espionage and deception operations

Grogan, Stanley J., Director of Public Affairs until November 1963

Harkins, Paul D. (Gen.), Commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam until June 1964

Harriman, W. Averell, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until April 1963, then Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and Chairman of Special Group Counterinsurgency

Harvey, William, Chief, Task Force W (Operation MONGOOSE), 1962

Helms, Richard M., Chief of Operations, DDP, until February 1962, then Deputy Director for Plans

Hilsman, Roger, Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, until April 1963, then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until March 1964

Hoover, J. Edgar, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Houston, Lawrence R., General Counsel, CIA

Johnson, Lyndon B., President of the United States beginning 22 November 1963

Johnson, U. Alexis, Deputy Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs and member of Special Group and 303 Committee until July 1964

Karamessines, Thomas, Assistant Deputy Director for Plans beginning May 1962

Katzenbach, Nicholas DeB., Deputy Attorney General and Acting Attorney General beginning in September 1964

Keating, Kenneth J., Republican Senator from New York until 1965

Kennedy, John F., President of the United States until 22 November 1963

Kennedy, Robert E., Attorney General until September 1964

Kent, Sherman, Chairman, Board of National Estimates and head of the Office of National Estimates

Killian, James M., President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Chairman of PFIAB until April 1963

King, J.C., Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, DDP

Kirkpatrick, Lyman B., Jr., CIA Inspector General until April 1962, then Executive Director and Executive Director-Comptroller

Knoche, E. Henry ("Hank"), DDCI Carter's Executive Assistant beginning November 1963

Krulak, Victor H. (Maj. Gen.), Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Land, Edwin H., President of Polaroid Corporation; member of PFIAB

Lansdale, Edward G. (Brig. Gen.), Special Assistant to Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, 1962-63

~~SECRET~~

Lay, James B., Executive Secretary of US Intelligence Board beginning June 1962

LeMay, Curtis (Gen.), Air Force Chief of Staff

Lemnitzer, Lyman (Gen.), Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and member of Special Group until September 1962

Lodge, Henry Cabot, Ambassador to South Vietnam, August 1963–June 1964

Lundahl, Arthur, Director, National Photographic Interpretation Center

McCloy, John J., Chairman of Ford Foundation, lead US negotiator for Cuban missile crisis settlement, and member of Warren Commission

McMillan, Brockway, Undersecretary of Air Force and Director, National Reconnaissance Office, beginning March 1963

McNamara, Robert S., Secretary of Defense

Meyer, Cord, Chief, Covert Action Staff, DDP

Murphy, David, Chief, Soviet Russia Division, DDP

Murrow, Edward R., Director, US Information Agency, and member of Special Group Augmented and Special Group Counterinsurgency until January 1964

Ngo Dinh Diem, President of Republic of South Vietnam until November 1963

Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of President Diem and head of security service until November 1963

Nguyen Khanh (Maj. Gen.), leader of January 1964 coup against "Big Minh"; Prime Minister of Republic of South Vietnam until November 1964

Nolting, Frederick E., Jr., Ambassador to South Vietnam until August 1963

Nosenko, Yuri, KGB officer who defected to the United States in February 1964

Osborn, Howard J., head of Office of Security beginning July 1964

Papich, Samuel, FBI liaison officer to CIA

Patman, Wright C., Democratic congressman from Texas who investigated CIA's methods for funding political covert action programs

Powers, Francis Gary, U-2 pilot shot down over Soviet Union in 1960 and released in 1962

Profumo, John, British Secretary of State for War implicated in "sexpionage" scandal during 1962–63

Raborn, William F., Jr. (Adm. [ret.]), McCone's successor as DCI

Ray Rivero, Manolo, head of anti-Castro expatriate group Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE)

Reuther, Walter, President of United Automobile Workers

Rowan, Carl T., Director, US Information Agency and member of Special Group Counterinsurgency beginning January 1964

Rusk, Dean, Secretary of State

Russell, Richard, Democratic Senator from Georgia; Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee and its CIA oversight subcommittee

Scoville, Herbert ("Pete"), head of Office of Scientific Intelligence until June 1962; Deputy Director for Research, February 1962–June 1963

Smith, R. Jack, head of Office of Current Intelligence beginning April 1962

Souvanna Phouma, leader of neutralist political forces in Laos, Prime Minister during 1963–64, Minister of Defense beginning May 1964

Sullivan, William H., Ambassador to Laos beginning December 1964

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Taylor, Maxwell D. (Gen. [ret.]), President's Military Representative until October 1962, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff until July 1964, then Ambassador to South Vietnam; member of Special Group until June 1964

Unger, Frederick, Ambassador to Laos until December 1964

Vance, Cyrus, Deputy Secretary of Defense after January 1964

Warner, John S., Legislative Counsel, CIA

Warren, Earl, Chief Justice and chairman of presidential commission investigating John F. Kennedy's assassination

Weisner, Jerome, President Kennedy's science adviser

Wheeler, Earle G. (Gen.), Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff beginning July 1964

Wheelon, Albert D. ("Bud"), head of Office of Scientific Intelligence, June 1962-August 1963, then Deputy Director for Science and Technology

White, Lawrence K. ("Red"), Deputy Director for Support

Wise, David, journalist and coauthor of *The Invisible Government*

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INTRODUCTION

Secret Lives: Intelligence Literature, Intelligence Biography, and DCIs As Leaders (U)

Everyone likes a good spy story," runs a maxim of the publishing world. The public's fascination with cloak-and-dagger intrigue has only intensified in recent years as the number of nonfiction books and articles about espionage, counterintelligence, and covert action has increased sharply. In part because of officially mandated declassification programs, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, deeper mining of national security files in presidential libraries, and legal moves by authors and "openness" organizations, many more documents, photographs, and other once-secret records are available for use in writing on all aspects of the craft of intelligence. In 1995, *Books in Print* listed 215 titles about intelligence; in the current online edition, there are well over 1,000. In addition, several specialized journals carry dozens of articles and reviews on intelligence topics every year; some major American newspapers have reporters who cover the Intelligence Community as part of their national security beat; true spy tales often appear in newsweeklies, opinion journals, and even slick society and culture magazines; and the World Wide Web contains hundreds of sites on intelligence issues, both serious and sensational. "Spying," one historian of this literary genre has observed, "rival[s] money, sex, and war as a topic in the popular market for history."¹ (U)

Intelligence Studies: A Problem of Identity (U)

Naturally, this forest of printed matter varies markedly in quality and usefulness for the intelligence historian.² It encompasses pulpish exposés, buffish minutia, apologetics and polemics, political and bureaucratic models, theoretical ruminations, journalistic biographies, and scholarly exegeses, as well as occasional ambitious efforts at sweeping syntheses and textbook-like overviews. Despite all the attention—and in part because of it—the study of intelligence history has yet to develop into an independent disci-

pline within the historical profession. It may have the requisite paraphernalia—journals and newsletters, organizations and study groups, symposia, university courses, and an electronic discussion forum—but outside its small community of practitioners, historians do not regard it as a subfield akin to specialties such as constitutional, military, women's, or even sports history. Intelligence history may no longer be the "missing dimension" of historical studies, but the profession still sees it as a stepchild within the extended family known as diplomatic history (or alternatively, "international relations").³ (U)

Consequently, intelligence topics often are not integrated into historical discussions of foreign affairs. When dealt with at all, they usually appear as cut-and-paste additions to bigger stories, and disproportionate attention is paid to covert actions over espionage, counterintelligence, and analysis. Diplomatic historians who do not specialize in intelligence justify this "sidebar" treatment on several grounds. One is the lack of documentation. Sound scholarship on intelligence is difficult to do, the argument goes, because so much essential information remains secret, controlled by the US government, ostensibly in the name of national security. Even when formerly classified material is released, historians often react suspiciously: "Why are they telling us *this*, and why *now*? What else *aren't* they telling us, and why not?" Intellectual honesty and rigor demand that all sources be available to everyone and that they be reputable and, wherever possible, open to corroboration. Diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis has noted:

[t]he historian of postwar intelligence activities is forced to rely upon a thin thread of evidence spun out in a bewildering array of mostly unverifiable writings and recollections by former officials (both disgruntled and not), defectors, journalists, parahistorians, and

¹ John Ferris, "Coming In From the Cold War: The Historiography of American Intelligence, 1945–1990," *Diplomatic History* (DH) 19, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 88. (U)

² The historical literature of intelligence is discussed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

³ Christopher Andrew and David Dilks, eds., *The Missing Dimension*, 1. Scholars who think intelligence activity made a difference in the outcome of the Cold War are themselves divided over the relative usefulness of various intelligence activities and methods. Some believe that human espionage operations and covert actions were vital to the West's purported victory, whereas others argue that the Intelligence Community's greatest contribution was in advancements in technical reconnaissance (the U-2 and imagery and SIGINT satellites). Illustrative of the "stepchild" perception is the section of "Recent Scholarship" in the *Journal of American History* (JAH). The compilation includes nearly four dozen categories covering a wide span of geographical, chronological, sociological, and conceptual topics—a number of which are subdisciplines broken out from broader specialties. The JAH does not, however, divide the large category of "International Relations" into any subsidiary topics. An early examination of US intelligence as a scholarly discipline is Kenneth G. Robertson, "The Study of Intelligence in the United States," in Roy Godson, ed., *Comparing Foreign Intelligence: The U.S., the U.S.S.R., the U.K. and the Third World*, 7–42. (U)

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INTRODUCTION

novelists. As the sheer volume—and marketability—of this material suggests, the subject does not lack fascination. What it is missing, however, is the basis for solid history.⁴

That may be a general standard of evidence many historical subfields do not, and, because of the passage of time, cannot achieve, but it is not necessarily the case with modern intelligence history. Unless documents have been lost or destroyed, they lay somewhere in official archives, out of reach except to privileged researchers—a type of scholar not unusual in Europe, but whose endeavors violate the egalitarian sensibilities of the American academy.⁵ (U)

Another tack scholars of American foreign relations take toward the study of intelligence is to contend that writers on the subject often are amateurs and aficionados preoccupied with novelistic detail and obscure operations, often at the expense of the “big picture.” Certainly intelligence history must be more than a compendium of thrilling spy yarns to be considered legitimate, and too frequently the chroniclers of the secret world have expended too much effort dredging up entertaining but largely inconsequential vignettes. “Intelligence developments,” observes historian Bradley F. Smith, “have tended to be seen as in-house history, with little attention being paid to anything but the great game with the USSR and bureaucratic transformations in Washington.” Moreover, some of that history lapses into oral legend, with the only “evidence” being the now-it-can-be-told reminiscence of a dark-alley spyhandler. In another respect, however, this criticism is disingenuous. If scholars had not surrendered so much of the intelligence field to nonacademics and dilettantes—who comprise what historian Christopher Andrew dismisses as the “airport bookstall” school of historiography—“serious” research would not have been crowded out.⁶ (U)

The ready answer to that riposte is that intelligence was not very important anyway in the larger scheme of things. The perennial complaint of the battlefield commander is that secrets about the enemy are always “too little, too late,” and policymakers either often misuse, misunderstand, or ignore intelligence. In other cases, the influence of intelligence on policy is assumed, not proved; because secret information was available to leaders, it must have affected their decisions. With historians now having selective access to foreign archives, however, the role of intelligence in changing the world actually has been depreciated. Historians were once admonished that they needed to rewrite recent diplomatic and military history to include the impact of intelligence, as with ULTRA and World War II. In the post-Cold War age of enlightenment, however, “we now know”—or, perhaps more accurately, “we are now told”—that intelligence did not matter that much except in remarkable, and remarkably few, circumstances such as the Cuban missile crisis. (U)

Who's In Charge? (U)

Similar questions can be asked about the subgenre of intelligence biography. Do historians and writers have access to enough reliable information about American intelligence officials, and particularly the Directors of Central Intelligence (DCIs), to fairly assess their careers and contributions? Are these officials important enough figures in the foreign policy establishment to merit the attention of scholars? Have popular biographies preempted more rigorous and better researched life-and-times studies of them? In short, did DCIs make a difference, can we learn enough to tell if they did, and is there anything left to say about them? As heads of the largest agglomeration of secret services in what used to be called the Free World, the DCIs might reasonably be thought to have had a substantial influence on the

⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, “Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins,” *DH* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 192. On the same point, from the perspective of the discipline of international relations, see Michael G. Fry and Miles Hochstein, “Epistemic Communities: Intelligence Studies and International Relations,” *Intelligence and National Security* (*IN*) 8, no. 3 (July 1993): 14–28. (U)

⁵ Several well-known British writers and scholars of intelligence—for example, Nigel West, Chapman Pincher, Gordon Brooke-Shepherd, and Christopher Andrew—have published what in effect are quasi-official histories based on “inside” information that often cannot be confirmed. American examples of that authorial phenomenon are almost nonexistent. Well-connected intelligence journalists such as Thomas Powers, David Wise, Ronald Kessler, and James Bamford benefit from official and unauthorized leaks, but they have retained their reputations for independence and skepticism. CIA allowed Jerrold Schecter to see operational files on one singular espionage case for his and Peter S. Deriabin's book on Soviet military intelligence officer Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Spy Who Saved the World*. Perhaps the most prominent instance of an American writer being allowed an extensive “peek behind the curtain” is Evan Thomas, who sought and received access to Agency records while writing *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA*. Thomas describes the convolutions of that experience in “Gaining Access to CIA's Records,” *Studies in Intelligence* (*SI*) 39, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 1–6. Judging from the acclaim his book received, he obviously negotiated his way through the exercise without taint. (U)

⁶ Bradley F. Smith, “An Idiosyncratic View of Where We Stand on the History of American Intelligence in the Early Post-1945 Era,” *IN* 3, no. 4 (1988): 113; D. Cameron Watt, “Intelligence and the Historian: A Comment on John Gaddis's ‘Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins,’” *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 199–204. (U)

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execution, and at times the formulation, of US national security policy. That may have been especially so during the Cold War, when presidents considered covert action and espionage as essential weapons in fighting the United States' main adversaries, the Soviet Union and Communist China. As far as source material goes, certainly enough documentation is available in the CIA Archives and Records Center to keep a DCI biographer with clearances busy for years, and manuscript collections held in public and university archives and presidential libraries can supplement that rich trove. (U)

Lastly, just in terms of numbers of published titles, the answer to the question "Are DCIs important enough to write about?" so far has been "yes." More biographies have been written about DCIs and senior CIA operations officers than about comparable members of the American foreign policy community—the secretaries of state and defense, the presidents' national security advisers, the chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and second- and third-tier officials at Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon. Moreover, this body of literature about CIA leaders, although somewhat uneven in coverage, generally is quite high in quality. Its research is sound, its prose is readable, and for the most part its authors have avoided fixation on the sinister side of the "black arts." The main limitation of works on the DCIs is that only a few of them—studies of Walter Bedell Smith, Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, and William Colby, written by CIA historians with full access to classified Agency records—are based on anything approaching a complete look at the record. Otherwise, DCI biographers have had to depend mainly on declassified documents (either released previously or in response to their own, inherently limited, FOIA requests), memoirs, and interviews with intelligence officials to gain an inside look at the careers of the DCIs. (U)

An inconsistency exists between the length of the bibliography on DCIs and the evaluation made of their importance. The 18 men who have directed the US government's intelligence machinery since 1946 (acting DCIs and Porter Goss, confirmed as the 19th DCI just before this book went to press, are not included) generally have not been perceived as being nearly as influential as most of their counterparts. A number of secretaries of state and defense—notably George

Marshall, Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, and Donald Rumsfeld—are regarded as major players in the diplomatic and military developments of their times, as is at least one national security adviser, Kissinger. The DCIs are another matter. Only two, Allen Dulles and William Casey, usually are considered to have had an impact rivaling that of the other top foreign policy officials in the administrations in which they served. The rest rarely get mentioned in most foreign affairs surveys (although Helms and Colby may come up when the Agency's "time of troubles" in the 1970s is discussed). Even in overviews of CIA and the Intelligence Community, only a handful—Hoyt Vandenberg, Smith, Dulles, John McCone, Casey, and possibly Helms—are portrayed as noteworthy contributors to the way the US government conducts intelligence activity.⁷ (U)

That consensus may derive from the DCIs' perceived lack of independence, which in turn results from conceptions of the proper place of intelligence practitioners in the foreign policy process. Intelligence, the premise goes, should be detached from policy so as to avoid cross-corruption of either. Appointment as DCI, Allen Dulles stated in 1947, "should be somewhat comparable to appointment to high judicial office, and should be equally free from interference due to political changes."⁸ If intelligence services have a stake in policy, they may skew their analyses or become aggressive advocates of covert action. The Intelligence Community must remain a source of objective assessment and not become a politicized instrument of the incumbent administration. As heads of the community, DCIs should be "intellocrats" who administer specialized secret functions, not to benefit any departmental interests but to advance policies set elsewhere in the executive branch—specifically, the White House. DCIs report to the National Security Council (NSC) and truly "serve at the pleasure of the president"—indeed, much of every DCI's influence has been directly proportional to his *personal* relationship with the chief executive. (U)

At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, since incoming presidents began choosing "their" DCIs in 1977, the nonpartisan stature of the DCI has diminished, and along with it, his independence. DCIs may be "hand picked" by new administrations, but that has not always

⁷ Historical studies and biographies of the DCIs are discussed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

⁸ Allen Dulles statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, 25 April 1947, regarding the proposed National Security Act, National Security Act clipping file, folder 29, Historical Intelligence Collection, CIA Library (HIC). (U)

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translated into greater influence. The president's national security adviser and the secretaries of state and defense usually have had more access to the Oval Office. The situation is not much different at Langley. Directors may come and go, but bureaucracies stay. When DCIs have tried to "clean house" (James Schlesinger and Stansfield Turner), or to manage through loyalists from a previous job (John Deutch), the result has been administrative disarray and abysmal morale. For these reasons and more, no DCI ever has had a chance to become as autonomous as J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI or to be assessed as having more than an episodic impact on US foreign policy. (U)

Can DCIs, then, be regarded as *leaders*, as opposed to heads of organizations or chief administrators? Was, and is, US intelligence noticeably different because a certain individual served as DCI? Do DCIs—*can* they—have a leadership role commensurate with that of their counterparts at the Departments of State and Defense? One way to begin answering those questions is through serial biography and group analysis. In contrast to Clandestine Services officers, however, DCIs have not been examined in such a fashion. Unlike some Agency careerists, they do not fit into categories like "prudent professionals" and "bold easterners," and they lack the sociological homogeneity needed to be thought of, or to think of themselves as, a network of "old boys" or, in William Colby's words, "the cream of the academic and social aristocracy." Anyway, biographers have attached those labels largely to former operators in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) who joined the early CIA and then stayed on—a situation that applies only to one DCI, Helms.⁹ (U)

The DCIs have had few major characteristics in common that lend them to comparative study.¹⁰ The most pertinent is that two-thirds of them had direct experience with intelligence in military or civilian life before their appointments. Five served in either or both the OSS and CIA, and four had backgrounds in military intelligence. Another four had indirect experience with intelligence. The other quality most of

them share is extensive education. Over half completed graduate school; seven received master's or law degrees, and three earned doctorates. Seven of the remaining eight finished college; just one (Smith) only made it through high school. Otherwise, the DCIs' biographic profiles are markedly different. Their median age at the time of their appointment was 53, but that is only the central tendency of the group; most were at least several years above or below that age. They came to the job from varied pursuits: five were in the military, four were government officials or lawyers, three had been businessmen, and two came from politics or academe. The first four DCIs were military officers; the last six have been civilians. The backgrounds of recent DCIs have been less diverse than in times past; all of them appointed since 1993 worked in the US government in the national security area. One characteristic the DCIs probably would prefer not to share is their relatively short tenure. The median time they served is just over three years, and only five DCIs have stayed at least four years. Between late 1991 and late 1996, three directors held the job an average of just 19 months. (U)

A Leadership Typology (U)

This heterogeneity does not mean, however, that the DCIs cannot be analyzed collectively. At least some aspects of the many models applied to political and corporate leaders can be used with the DCIs. Empiricism or utility sometimes suffer, however, when these schemes are employed. Complex personalities and complicated situations are made less square to fit more easily into the models' round holes, or so many different holes are created that comparisons among individuals become too hard to draw. In other instances, an ideal construct is used to judge whether a leader was effective or not, but too often those concepts are vague or simplistic, or they reflect the managerial or political preferences of the scholar and do not necessarily arise from the leadership group being studied.¹¹ (U)

⁹ See Stewart Alsop, *The Center: People and Power in Political Washington*; Burton Hersch, *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA*; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, "The Socio-Educational Composition of the CIA Elite: A Statistical Note," *Journal of American Studies*, 19, no. 3 (December 1985): 421–24; Robert E. Spears Jr., "The Bold Easterners Revisited: The Myth of the CIA Elite," in Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones and Andrew Lownie, eds., *North American Spies: New Revisionist Essays*, 202–17; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*; and Robin W. Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961*. The Colby quote is from his memoir *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA*, 180. A preliminary look at the circumstances of various DCIs' appointments is Stafford T. Thomas, "On the Selection of Directors of Central Intelligence," *Southeastern Political Review* 9, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 1–59. In 1993 the CIA History Staff prepared a survey of the transition periods of all DCIs up until then: "Fifteen DCIs' First 100 Days," *Studies* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 49–59. Problems that DCIs have had in running the Intelligence Community are analyzed in Loch K. Johnson, "The DCI vs. the Eight-Hundred Pound Gorilla," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (IJIC)* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 35–48. (U)

¹⁰ Most of the following biographic data comes from CIA History Staff, *Directors and Deputy Directors of Central Intelligence*. (U)

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Secret Lives: Intelligence Literature, Intelligence Biography, and DCIs As Leaders (U)

A more straightforward approach to the DCIs may be worth trying—one that takes into account the institutional and political limitations on their authority, the objectives they were appointed to accomplish, their personality traits, and their managerial methods. What were the directors told to do (*mission*) and how did they go about doing it (*style*)? With those questions addressed, an evaluation of their effectiveness can be made. How well did the DCIs do what they were expected to, given their authorities, resources, and access (*record*)? What “types” of DCIs, if any, have been most successful (*patterns*)? (U)

Using this perspective, six varieties of DCIs are evident. The first two are the *administrator-custodian* and *administrator-technocrat*, charged with implementing, fine-tuning, or reorienting intelligence activities under close direction from the White House. Examples of these types have been Sidney Souers, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, William Raborn, James Woolsey, John Deutch, and George Tenet. Usually appointed at a time of uncertainty about the Intelligence Community's roles and capabilities (the late 1940s and the mid-1990s), these DCIs tried to maintain stability in CIA's relationships with other community agencies, Congress, and the public. Their main goals were to do better with what they already had and to avoid distractions and scandals. Except for Raborn, all of these administrators had experience with intelligence affairs, but they were not intelligence careerists. Some had a very low-key style, almost to the point of acting like placeholders and time-servers (Hillenkoetter, Raborn). Others energetically pursued administrative changes designed to make the community more responsive to policymakers and better adapted to a new political environment (Deutch, Tenet). (U)

Next is the *intelligence operator*, a current or former professional intelligence officer, tasked with devising, undertak-

ing, and overseeing an extensive array of covert action, espionage, and counterintelligence programs in aggressive service of US national security policy. Three DCIs fit this category: Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, and William Casey. The presidents they served had no qualms about using all of the US government's clandestine capabilities to win the Cold War, and they relied on their DCIs' knowledge of and experience with operations. The DCI as intelligence operator emphasized different secret activities, depending on his background and predilections. Dulles and Casey were devotees of covert action, while Helms preferred to work with espionage and counterintelligence. Because of the prominent place clandestine affairs had in American foreign policy when they served, this type of DCI generally had close relationships with the president. Partly for that reason, these DCIs served longer by far—seven years on average—than any other type. (U)

The high level of secret activity during those long tenures recurrently produced operational mishaps, revelations of “flaps,” and other intelligence failures that hurt CIA's public reputation and damaged its relations with the White House and Congress. The Bay of Pigs disaster under Dulles, the ineffective covert action in Chile under Helms, and the Iran-Contra scandal under Casey are prominent examples. As journalist James Reston noted during the Agency's dark days in the mid-1970s, DCIs who came up through the ranks might have known more about what CIA should be doing than outsiders, “but they are not likely to be the best men at knowing what it should not be doing.”¹² (U)

Failures, indiscretions, and other such controversies in turn have led to the departures of those intelligence-operator DCIs and their replacement by *manager-reformers* charged with “cleaning up the mess” and preventing similar

¹¹ Not surprisingly, American leadership scholars have analyzed US presidents more than any other officeholders. The utility of those efforts remains to be determined. The ranking of presidents that Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. started decades ago has become a regular exercise for academicians and journalists, although shifts in the ratings of specific presidents suggest more that the *Zeitgeist* has changed rather than the arrival of a new empirical basis for reevaluation. At one end of the scale of complexity is James David Barber's pathbreaking work, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, which puts all 37 presidents until then into a four-box matrix designed around their levels of engagement and initiative (“passive” or “active”) and their *joie de vivre* in holding office and exercising power (“positive” or “negative”). Barber concluded that the most effective presidents had “active-positive” characters. At the other end of the scale is a recent study by a group of psychologists called “The Personality and the President Project.” It examined the first 42 chief executives for five psychological characteristics—agreeableness, neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness—and came up with eight personality types—dominators, introverts, “good guys,” innocents, actors, maintainers, philosophers, and extroverts. Despite all the criteria and categories, the psychologists' findings were easy to summarize and not very venture-some: Successful presidents “set ambitious goals for themselves and move heaven and earth to meet them” and “are not necessarily the nicest guys on the block. They are assertive and hardheaded, and tend to be impulsive.” Marc Kaufman, “Profiles Offer a Peek Inside the Presidential Psyche,” *Washington Post*, 7 August 2000: A7; Danielle Eubanks, “Great Presidents May Be the Crankiest,” *Washington Times*, 7 August 2000: A2. (U)

An admirably objective effort to analyze DCIs according to whether their primary loyalty is to the president, the intelligence profession, a political cause, the rule of law, or Congress and the public, is Glenn P. Hastedt, “Controlling Intelligence: The Role of the D.C.I.,” *IJIC* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1986–87): 25–40. A short evaluation of the effectiveness of “political” versus “nonpolitical” DCIs—the former being those whose appointments were based largely on partisan concerns—is Ward Warren, “Politics, Presidents, and DCIs,” *IJIC* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 337–44. (U)

¹² Renze L. Hoeksema, “The President's Role in Insuring Efficient, Economical, and Responsible Intelligence Services,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly (PSQ)* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 193. (U)

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INTRODUCTION

problems from happening again. There have been two kinds of manager-reformer DCIs. One is the *insider*—a career intelligence officer who used his experience at CIA to reorganize the bureaucracy and redirect Agency activities during or after a time of political controversy and uncertainty about its direction. Two DCIs functioned as manager-reformer insiders: William Colby and Robert Gates. Colby, an operations veteran with experience going back to the OSS, sought to rescue CIA from the political tempests of the mid-1970s and to regain some of the Agency's lost prestige through his policy of controlled cooperation with congressional investigators and targeted termination of questionable activities. Gates, a long-time Soviet analyst who had worked on the NSC in two administrations and served as deputy director for intelligence, moved the Agency into the post-Cold War era after a period of undynamic leadership. (U)

The other type of manager-reformer is the *outsider*, who is chosen to draw on his experience in the military, business, government, or politics to implement a major reorganization of CIA and the community or to regroup and redirect the Agency, especially after major operational setbacks or public conflicts over secret activities. Five DCIs have been manager-reformer outsiders: Hoyt Vandenberg, Walter Bedell Smith, John McCone, James Schlesinger, and Stansfield Turner. Collectively they have been responsible for more major changes at CIA (or its predecessor, the Central Intelligence Group [CIG]) than any other category of director. For example, under Vandenberg the CIG acquired its own budgetary and personnel authority, received responsibility for collecting all foreign intelligence (including atomic secrets) and preparing national intelligence analyses, and coordinated all interdepartmental intelligence activities. Smith—in response to intelligence failures before the Korean War and to confusion and infighting among operations officers—centralized espionage and covert actions, analysis, and administration by rearranging CIA into three directorates and creating the Office of National Estimates (ONE). In effect, he organized the Agency into the shape it has today. Schlesinger and Turner removed or saw to the departure of hundreds of Clandestine Services veterans to streamline the Agency's bureaucracy, lower the profile of covert action, and move CIA more toward analysis and technical collection. Most DCIs in this category have been hard-charging, strong-willed, and ambitious, far more concerned about achieving their objectives than about angering bureaucratic rivals or fostering ill will among subor-

dinates. Largely because they accomplished so much and did not worry about who they antagonized, some of them have been the most disliked or hardest to get along with of any DCIs. (U)

Finally, there are the *restorers*, George Bush and William Webster. Like the manager-reformer outsiders, they became DCIs after the Agency went through difficult times—they succeeded Colby and Casey, respectively—but they were not charged with making significant changes in the way CIA did business. Instead, they used their "people skills" and public reputations to raise morale, repair political damage, and burnish the Agency's reputation. Bush, a prominent figure in Republican Party politics, went to Langley to mend CIA's relations with Congress, and to use his amiability to improve *esprit de corps* and put a more benign face on the Agency. Webster, the director of the FBI and a former federal judge, brought a quality of rectitude to an Agency mired in scandal and helped raise its stature in the community and with the public. (U)

John McCone: The Archetypal Outsider (U)

John McCone was DCI from 29 November 1961 to 28 April 1965, a time when some of the great events of the Cold War occurred—the Cuban missile crisis, the early Vietnam war, the split between the Soviet Union and Communist China, and the assassination of John Kennedy, to name but a few. McCone's background put him in stark contrast with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in which he served. He was a conservative Republican working for liberal Democratic presidents, a self-made businessman from the West in a government filled with scions of the Eastern Establishment, a bottom-line executive in his early sixties dealing with many much younger policymakers steeped in academic theories. Yet McCone was appointed in the wake of the Bay of Pigs debacle largely for just those reasons. His proven success as a corporate manager and his political connections with the opposition party commended him to the Kennedy administration, which was resolved to use all the assets of the Intelligence Community to prevail in the fight against international communism. The White House wanted a tested and reliable executive in charge of its clandestine campaign against Moscow, Beijing, and their satellites and proxies. (U)

~~SECRET~~*Secret Lives: Intelligence Literature, Intelligence Biography, and DCIs As Leaders (U)*

McCone's directorship has not been examined comprehensively. Most writers have focused on his involvement in the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War.¹³ The story of McCone's 41 months at Langley goes far beyond those familiar and much-studied events, however. He was an extremely active manager, deeply interested in the full range of the community's and CIA's business, whether administrative, technological, analytical, or operational. He also was politically connected and astute, and showed great sensitivity to the Agency's relations with the White House, other community departments, Congress, and the media and public. (U)

This study will examine McCone's extensive involvement in the whole span of American intelligence activities, and endeavor to show how his background and personal attributes affected his accomplishments and shortcomings in leading CIA and the community during some of the bleakest years of the Cold War. The work will seek to capture, in biographer Edmund Morris's words, "the endlessly interesting spectacle of character meeting circumstance and either changing it or being changed by it."¹⁴ The narrative is generally chronological, and the sudden change in presidents in November 1963 provides a logical break in the treatment of certain subjects, such as Cuba and Southeast Asia, where different policies were adopted. In a few other cases, however—such as science and technology, and some clandestine operations and managerial affairs—no notable differences in McCone's involvement occurred after the switch in administrations. Accordingly, those subjects are covered in one piece. (U)

Principal archival sources for this book have been the files of the Office of the DCI and the DCI Executive Registry; the Directorates of Intelligence, Operations, and Science and Technology; and other Agency and community components with which McCone dealt regularly, such as the Offices of Congressional Affairs and Public Affairs, the Office of the Inspector General, and the US Intelligence Board (USIB). A collection of McCone's "papers" as DCI, archived in 11 boxes, has been the principal documentary source for this work. (McCone was a strong believer in leaving a "paper trail.")¹⁵ Many volumes of the Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* series, as well as numerous collections published by commercial or academic presses or posted on official and nongovernmental Web sites, contain documents on the national security and intelligence issues in which McCone and the community were engaged in the early 1960s. The CIA History Staff's own files and large archive of oral history interviews and classified internal histories and materials in CIA's Historical Intelligence Collection (HIC) have proven invaluable, as have interviews and documents from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson presidential libraries. The extensive memoir literature on the period has added many first-person recollections. The Kennedy and Johnson presidencies have attracted the attention of a small army of scholars whose research and insights have contributed importantly to this work. The principal books and articles used are discussed in the Appendix on Sources or listed in the bibliography. (U)

¹³ McCone's tenure is discussed in any detail in only two published works: Kenneth J. Campbell, "John A. McCone: An Outsider Becomes DCI," *Studies* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 49–60; and Peter S. Usowski, "John McCone and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Persistent Approach to the Intelligence–Policy Relationship," *IJIC* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 547–76. Hastedt, "Controlling Intelligence," identifies McCone's loyalty as being primarily to certain policies and secondarily to the president. Other open sources that treat McCone in the context of narrower issues will be mentioned in subsequent chapters. Two unpublished, classified manuscripts on McCone's directorship repose in History Staff (HS) Files, Job 03-01724R, boxes 7 and 8: Mary S. McAuliffe, "John A. McCone As Director of Central Intelligence, 1961–1965," completed in 1994; and Walter Elder (McCone's long-time executive assistant), "John A. McCone: The Sixth Director of Central Intelligence," completed in 1987 (hereafter Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987).") The former concentrates on Cuba and Vietnam. The latter is an abridgment of a much longer unpublished chronicle by Elder, "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence." Assembled in 1973, it is basically a compilation of document summaries. It is archived in HS Files, Job 87-01032R, boxes 1–5. Hereafter, references to this work will be cited as Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)." ~~(S)~~

¹⁴ Bill Goldstein, "No Fiction in Roosevelt's Story," *New York Times*, 1 January 2002: B5. (U)

¹⁵ McCone's official Agency papers are in DCI files, Job 80B01285A, boxes 1–11 (hereafter McCone Papers). His personal papers are at the University of California at Berkeley's Bancroft Library; they have not been archived and are not open to researchers. (U)

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Captain of Industry and Technology (U)

John Alex McCone's life and career before he joined the Central Intelligence Agency exhibited the drive, diligence, and focus that characterized his tenure as Director of Central Intelligence.¹ He was born on 4 January 1902 in San Francisco into a Scots-Irish family involved in the western machinery and manufacturing industries since 1860. That year, his namesake grandfather opened a small iron foundry in Virginia City, Nevada, during the boom times after the discovery of the silver-rich Comstock Lode in 1859. McCone's father, Alexander, bought or started other foundries in Reno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and the younger McCone lived in all three cities.² After graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1918, he attended the University of California at Berkeley's College of Engineering, where he acquired a reputation as a hard-working, humorless student—"a man with a slide-rule mind," according to one classmate. McCone's father died in 1920, so to help his family make ends meet and pay his tuition, he worked summers in shipyards and iron mills and had a night job at a foundry during his senior year. McCone graduated with honors in 1922, 10th in his class, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. (U)

From Overalls to Riches (U)

"A few years of pretty rough going" then followed, McCone recalled. He got a job as a 40-cents-per-hour boiler riveter for the Llewellyn Iron Works, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer and builder of steel frameworks for office buildings and petroleum storage tanks. McCone had so little money then that he had to borrow some to buy overalls and work shoes. Los Angeles's burgeoning construction industry helped carry him quickly out of the boiler shop and onto a surveying gang, then an erector crew, and, at age 26, into a position as construction manager. He was a hands-on supervisor from the start; he supposedly spent so much time

climbing around on skyscraper girders that life insurance companies would not issue him a policy. (U)

In 1929, after the Llewellyn Iron Works merged with two competitors during an economic slump, McCone became general superintendent and sales manager at the Consolidated Steel Corporation. Consolidated Steel boasted that it was the "biggest steel fabricator west of the Mississippi," but it suffered badly during the Depression. In 1931, McCone became general sales manager and was asked to reverse the fortunes of an underused and costly fabrication plant the company had built just before the crash. He later recalled that year as "a memorable [one] for sales managers. I was in search of my first customer when the other sales managers were sure they had seen their last." McCone and Consolidated Steel could count on an old school friend of his: Stephen Bechtel, Engineering Class of '21 and director of purchasing for his father's construction firm, which was ordering immense quantities of steel to build the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. The former college mates struck a deal, and Consolidated Steel eventually supplied Bechtel with 55 million tons. For saving his firm from bankruptcy, McCone was rewarded with an executive vice presidency and a directorship in 1933. He was not yet 32 years old. (U)

McCone's collaboration with Bechtel on the Hoover Dam positioned him to act on his "sense of imminent change, of great projects about to break at last upon the West," as he later described it. He resigned from Consolidated Steel in 1937 to start his own engineering company, but after about a year he accepted Stephen Bechtel's proposal that they join forces and create a firm to provide the oil industry with a full range of engineering and construction services. They formed the Bechtel-McCone Corporation as a sister firm to the W.A. Bechtel Company (founded by Stephen's father), with McCone as president and Bechtel

¹ Sources on McCone's early life and career are: Robert L. Ingram, *The Bechtel Story*, 10–12; idem, *A Builder and His Family*, 41–48; Laton McCartney, *Friends in High Places: The Bechtel Story*, 52–55; George J. Church, "Stephen Bechtel: Global Builder," *Time* 152, no. 23 (7 December 1998): 114–16; *Current Biography* 1959, s.v. "McCone, John A(lex)": 272–74; "Atomic Energy's McCone: A Private Dynamo in the Public Service," *Time* 71, no. 16 (16 June 1958): 16; "Energy for Atoms: John Alex McCone," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8; Charles J.V. Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," *Fortune* 58, no. 8 (August 1958): 194, 196; Gene Marine, "McCone of the AEC," *Nation* 189 (11 April 1959): 307–10; Russell Baker, "McCone Is Confirmed for C.I.A....," *New York Times*, 1 February 1962: 9; *A Conversation with John A. McCone*, 3–6; "The World Tonight," *CBS Reports* broadcast, 27 September 1961, transcript in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1. (U)

² When McCone was appointed DCI, the *Reno Gazette* reminded its readers that he once had been a newsboy for the paper. *Reno Gazette*, 30 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1. (U)

as chairman. They soon signed a multimillion-dollar contract with Standard Oil of California and filled big foreign orders as well. In two years, Bechtel-McCone had 10,000 employees and was building oil refineries, chemical plants, power facilities, and pipelines from the Rocky Mountains to the Amazon Basin and the Persian Gulf. (U)

Joining the "Arsenal of Democracy" (U)

After World War II started in Europe in 1939, McCone and Bechtel joined several large firms (the "Six Companies" consortium) in forming the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation, with an order to make five ships for the US Maritime Commission.³ In 1940, the Commission approached Bechtel-McCone and the other firms about building 60 cargo vessels for the British, and in January 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt announced that 200 similar ships would be constructed for American use. That was the start of the Emergency Shipbuilding Program, under which the United States manufactured many more merchant ships (nearly 5,700) than anyone had thought possible. The pace of production accelerated steadily throughout the war as experience grew, procedures were refined, and efficiencies took hold. Between 1940 and 1945, the United States' share of total Allied merchant ship construction rose from less than 40 percent to almost 90 percent. (U)

Bechtel-McCone was responsible for a large portion of that output. By 1943, McCone was overseeing tens of thousands of workers at three West Coast shipyards. One of them was a decrepit facility that needed major improvements to make it usable, while a second had to be built from scratch out of a swamp. McCone directly managed the California Shipbuilding Corporation ("Calship") facility at Terminal Island in Los Angeles Harbor, where 42,000 employees—less than one percent of whom had shipbuild-

ing experience—worked on as many as three dozen Liberty ships at once. (U)

Despite Bechtel-McCone's accomplishments, its main competitor, Henry Kaiser's company, got much more media attention. Lacking Kaiser's skills at self-promotion and unwilling to tussle with him publicly, McCone and Bechtel resolved to beat their rival in the factory. McCone "set production goals higher than anyone thought could be met, and then he made sure they were met," wrote the *New York Herald Tribune*. He did not shrink from putting in 100-hour workweeks himself to meet those targets. By late 1944, Calship was assembling 20 troop transports, tankers, and cargo vessels a month, making it the most productive shipyard in the world at that time. During the war it built 467 ships—nearly 10 percent of the Maritime Commission's output—valued at nearly \$1 billion. Meanwhile, in collaboration with Standard Oil, a Bechtel-McCone affiliate operated a fleet of nearly 90 tankers for the US Navy in the Pacific—one of the largest oil transporters anywhere. Stephen Bechtel gave most of the credit for the firm's success to his partner, calling McCone "the greatest organizer in the United States."⁴ (U)

Industrialist instinct, and possibly pique at Henry Kaiser, encouraged McCone and Bechtel to move into the aircraft industry, where Kaiser was reaping handsome profits. In the summer of 1942, Bechtel-McCone submitted a proposal to the Army to build an aircraft modification facility for the Air Corps in Birmingham, Alabama.⁵ McCone made his firm's proposal stand out from the 14 others—one of them Kaiser's—by attaching a bill for \$25,000 to it. The other companies had submitted proposals without charge, but McCone's brash tactic worked. He correctly calculated that the Army would pay the bill and, partly because it had, award the contract to Bechtel-McCone. The terms were exceedingly generous: cost plus five percent of work estimates that the firm developed, with payment rendered

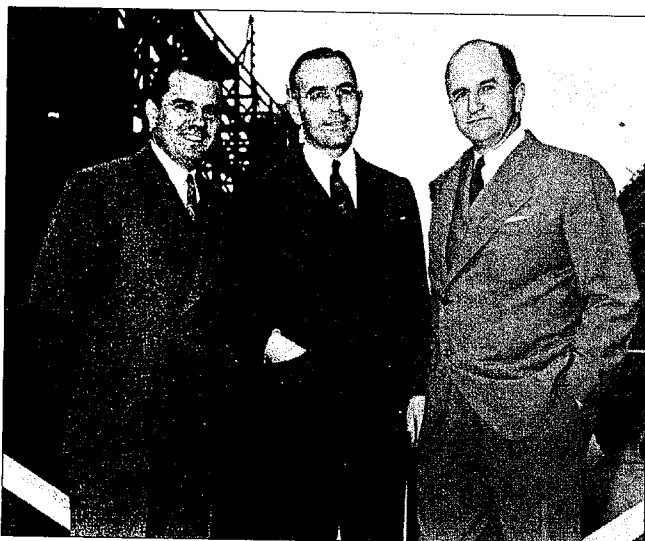
³ Information about the United States' wartime shipbuilding program comes from: McCartney, 56–59, 61; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, chap. 5; *Current Biography* 1959: 273; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; William S. White, "Ship Profit Data Called 'Half Truth,'" *New York Times*, 26 September 1946: 20; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 196; *Conversation with McCone*, 6–7; Charles Wollenberg, *Marinship at War*, 9–10, 15; Frederic C. Lane, *Ships for Victory*, 54, 175, 208, 211, 470; and Daniel Levine and Sara Ann Platt, "The Contribution of U.S. Shipbuilding and the Merchant Marine to the Second World War," in Robert A. Kilmarx, ed., *America's Maritime Legacy*, 175–214. (U)

⁴ McCone also served on the boards of directors of the Marinship Corporation—another Bechtel enterprise—in Sausalito, California and the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation. Calship's and Marinship's combined production made them the Maritime Commission's third-largest wartime shipbuilders, behind Kaiser and Bethlehem Steel. (U)

⁵ A modification facility reconfigured aircraft after they came off the regular assembly line with standard design and equipment. The system originated in Britain, which needed to adapt American aircraft to accommodate British specifications. It was easier to make the changes as the planes arrived in Britain than to alter American assembly lines to include specialized features. The Army Air Force used the facilities it underwrote to modify basic models it deployed in different combat theaters. Twenty-eight such facilities, employing over 45,000 people, were established in the United States during the war at a cost of around \$100 million. John B. Rae, *Climb To Greatness*, 148; Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces In World War II*, 316, 332, 336. (U)

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Captain of Industry and Technology (U)



McCone (center) with Stephen Bechtel Jr. and Stephen Bechtel Sr. at the Calship yard in 1945 (U)

Photo: Bechtel Corporation

whether or not the work was completed, according to an unpublished interview with McCone at the time. Bechtel-McCone built the Willow Run Aircraft Modification Plant on nearly 300 acres outside Birmingham and hired close to 9,000 employees.⁶ (U)

McCone soon got caught up in legal difficulties over the sensitive issue of war profiteering. By mid-1943, not one plane had flown off the Willow Run compound—partly because the bombers to be modified did not start arriving until late 1942—and reports of waste, fraud, and abuse proliferated. A local citizen's lawsuit prompted Alabama Sen. John Sparkman to visit Willow Run and meet with McCone and several Bechtel-McCone executives. Sparkman did not talk to any employees allegedly involved in featherbedding, cost overruns, and theft, and McCone and his colleagues apparently persuaded the senator that nothing was wrong. The lawsuit was dismissed because the contract Bechtel-McCone's attorneys submitted in court did not contain the

cost-plus provision that McCone claimed the Army had agreed to include. (A historian of the Bechtel enterprises notes that McCone "was famed for the exactitude of his memory" and suggests that the contract might have been altered.) The bottom line was that McCone and his associates avoided any legal or political sanction and earned \$3,375,000 for their firm from the Willow Run project. During the war years, this high return was not considered unusual for aircraft modification facilities. According to an official history of aircraft procurement during World War II, "the centers were staggeringly expensive to operate...[and were] a necessary evil...an expedient stopgap." All such facilities worked on loosely-drawn, cost-plus-fixed-fee terms, and their personnel performed many individual, labor-intensive operations, often under tight deadlines. In addition, the Bechtel-McCone plant got more of this remunerative work than most facilities because the Department of War designated it as one of two "overflow" centers for handling rush orders regular plants could not complete on time.⁷ (U)

By the time the war ended in mid-August 1945, Bechtel-McCone had brought in over \$100 million from marine, aviation, and engineering contracts on an initial investment of \$400,000 in the late 1930s. McCone emerged from the war with a personal fortune and a sterling reputation as a tough manager and exemplary patriot. At a ceremony in October 1945, the deputy of the Maritime Commission praised him for "building the ships that carried the guns that won the war."⁸ (U)

Maritime Magnate (U)

McCone quickly adjusted to the end of the wartime boom and his declining interest in heavy construction.⁹ For tax reasons, he and Stephen Bechtel liquidated their corporation, sold its assets, and created a new entity called Bechtel Brothers-McCone. Other tax considerations deterred

⁶ McCartney, 66–67; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 75–76. The facility was so named because it worked mainly on B-24 "Liberator" bombers produced at Ford's mammoth Willow Run plant near Detroit. I.B. Holley Jr., *Buying Aircraft*, 531. (U)

⁷ McCartney, 67–70; Rac, 149; Holley, 531–33, 537–38; Roger E. Bilstein, *The American Aerospace Industry*, 76–77; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 76. Production at Ford's Willow Run plant was so slow at first that it was derisively referred to as "Willit Run?" By the end of the war, however, the factory had produced more than 8,500 bombers, over 5,700 of which went to the Bechtel-McCone modification plant in Alabama. The Birmingham facility also remanufactured almost 6,000 of the Army's quarter-ton trucks and hundreds of other military vehicles. (U)

Another example of Bechtel-McCone's hard-nosed business practices is evident in the arrangement it reached with several other firms in jointly building and operating a new shipyard in Evansville, Indiana. Bechtel-McCone, the only member of the consortium with shipbuilding experience, agreed to assume half of the risk of the venture, but in return it would garner half of the profits. James H. and Patricia C. Kellar, *The Evansville Shipyard*, 109. (U)

⁸ McCartney, 67–70; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 49, 66, 70, 71. Among Bechtel-McCone's many other war-related contracts were a heating plant at Elmendorf Air Field in Alaska; a powder factory at an ordnance facility in Missouri; a power generating plant in California; and a storage tank farm in Washington (used in the Manhattan Project). (U)

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CHAPTER 1

McCone from taking an active role in management, however, and when the firm started to fail, he sold his interest to Bechtel. (U)

Congressional investigations into war profiteering in late 1946 produced some bad headlines and temporary embarrassment for McCone. An auditor for the Maritime Commission reported that Calship had turned a \$44 million profit on an investment of only \$100,000. "At no time in the history of American business," the auditor testified, "whether in wartime or peacetime, have so few men made so much money with so little risk—and all at the expense of the taxpayers, not only of this generation but of future generations." Appearing before the House Merchant Marine Subcommittee, McCone denounced the Commission report as "full of half-truths" derived from questionable accounting methods that understated what his firm had invested and overstated what it had earned. He noted, for example, that if the auditors had factored in the taxes Calship paid and the non-reimbursable charges it incurred, the company's profits would have dropped to under \$9 million. The subcommittee asked McCone why his firm—which earned the third-highest profits on paid-in capital before taxes and the fifth-highest after taxes of any war contractor—should have made so much just for operating the government-owned, government-supplied shipyard at Terminal Island. He responded that some wartime contracts were risky and that companies like his provided the US government with "unique management skill" and organizational and technical experience, without which the wartime shipbuilding effort would have foundered. (U)

Meanwhile, McCone's own business undertakings were performing well. After Bechtel-McCone broke up, McCone used some of his wartime windfall to buy full control of the Joshua Hendy Iron Works, a San Francisco-based firm that built ship engines during the war but had gone into a peacetime decline. McCone, the president and sole owner, added generators and earth-moving machinery to the Hendy product line and, after some initial setbacks, brought the com-

pany into the black. He moved Hendy into the maritime transport industry by setting up the Pacific Tankers Division to operate a fleet of oil carriers. In addition, he, Stephen Bechtel, and several West Coast associates from the construction industry formed the Pacific Far East Lines for hauling cargo to and from Japan, China, and the Philippines. McCone became majority stockholder and chairman of this highly profitable enterprise.¹⁰ (U)

Into the Wild Blue Yonder (U)

Even while overseeing his far-flung business interests and serving as a director of the Stanford Research Institute and a trustee and chief fund-raiser for the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech), McCone in his mid-40s found himself "a little restless" and increasingly attracted to government work. He was especially interested in the national security area, and the Department of Defense seemed the most compatible place for him. By this time, the southern California region where he lived had emerged as a bastion of the military-industrial complex, with a network of defense contractors and public officeholders who—like McCone—embodied its social conservatism, strong anticommunism, and entrepreneurial ethos. When left-wing journalist I.F. Stone called McCone "a rightist Catholic...with holy war views," it could be consigned to ideological punditry, but even McCone's associates at Bechtel—scarcely a den of accommodationists—found his anticommunist fervor unsettling. He was active in state and local Republican politics, and, a devout traditionalist Catholic, he became one of the Church's most prominent American laymen. He held many honorary and functional positions in Catholic institutions and in 1955 was made a Knight of St. Gregory, the highest honor for a Catholic layman, by Pope Pius XII. At other times, he received honorary degrees from Notre Dame, Fordham, and the Catholic University of America. In 1956, he represented the United States at a celebration of the pope's 80th birthday, and two years later he and Clare

⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCartney, 96; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 80–81; White, "Ship Profit Data Called 'Half Truth,'" 20; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "McCone Likely to Be Questioned on His Shipbuilding Profits," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 19 October 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1; Marine, 307–8; *Investigation of Shipyard Profits: Hearings Before the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, Seventy-Ninth Congress, Second Session...September 23, 24, 25, and 26, 1946*, 189–225; Wollenberg, 25–27; Lane, 817, and chap. 4 passim on shipbuilding contracts generally; and John Perry Miller, *Pricing of Military Procurements*, 124–33, on the US Government's wartime use of the cost-plus-fixed-fee contract. (U)

¹⁰ McCartney, 96–97; Ingram, *A Builder and His Family*, 58–59; *Current Biography* 1959: 273; "Change in Iron Company," *New York Times*, 22 December 1945: 26; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; *Conversation with McCone*, 9; McCone's biographical statement submitted to Senate Armed Services Committee, 18 January 1962, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. McCone had been president of Hendy during the war; its board then also included Stephen Bechtel and his brother Kenneth. Wollenberg, [redacted]

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Captain of Industry and Technology (U)

Boothe Luce, a close friend, stood in for the president at the pope's funeral.¹¹ (U)

In 1947, McCone got his chance to turn thoughts into deeds when President Harry Truman invited him to become a member of the Air Policy Commission, charged with devising a strategy for American military airpower (and thereby reviving the moribund aircraft industry). The Commission published its report in January 1948 with the attention-grabbing title *Survival in the Air Age*. It concluded that "the country must have a new strategic concept for its defense...the core of this concept is air power." However, "[t]he Air Force as presently composed is inadequate...not only at the present time when we are relatively free of the dangers of sustained attack on our homeland, but [it] is hopelessly wanting in respect of the future...when a serious danger of atomic attack will exist." Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the US government build hundreds more military aircraft and create a massive strategic bomber force. In short, the American aviation industry was to be revitalized to support national security needs. McCone wrote the military recommendations in the report, which became one of the key documents in the campaign to increase defense spending during the early Cold War. The Commission's ideas were well received in southern California, where aviation—the state's largest manufacturing industry—had an economic and social influence second only to the automobile because of the wartime boom in aircraft construction. The fate of the industry and the vitality of that region were intertwined in what one historian has aptly termed the "pax aeronautica."¹² (U)

pressed McCone into several months of service at the Pentagon as a special assistant developing the first budget for the unified military services and for the new Air Force. Besides what he remembered as "long hours, sleepless nights...[and] pounding the table" to get agreement on the budget, McCone also spent a good deal of time helping implement the National Security Act of 1947, including the portions dealing with the new Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense. Afterward, he returned to his shipping business.¹³ (U)

McCone was soon back in Washington, serving as under-secretary of the Air Force. His brief tenure (May 1950–October 1951) helped him learn to run a public organization, but the bureaucratic controversy and personal tension he engendered demonstrated the limits of his brusque leadership style. He was responsible for procurement and construction of overseas airbases during the first year of the Korean War—when the defense budget increased more in both real dollars and as a percentage of GNP than in any



After the Commission issued its report, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal

The Air Policy Commission presents its report to President Truman. McCone is third from the left. (U)

Photo: US Air Force

¹¹ McCartney, 97; *Current Biography* 1959: 273; "AEC Changes Its Top Command," *Business Week*, no. 1502 (14 June 1958): 32; Roger W. Lotchin, *Fortress California*, chaps. 4–7; Ann Markusen et al., *The Rise of the Gunbelt*, 84–100; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, chap. 1; James Q. Wilson, "A Guide to Reagan Country: The Political Culture of Southern California," *Commentary* 43 (May 1967): 37–45. (U)

¹² McCartney, 97–98; George M. Watson Jr., *The Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, 1947–1965*, 106; President's Air Policy Commission, *Survival in the Air Age: A Report by the President's Air Policy Commission*, 10, 24; Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force*, 161–64; Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, 313–16; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; Rae, 192–94; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *Conversation with McCone*, 10–13; Lotchin, *Fortress California*, chaps. 4–7; Martin J. Schiesl, "Airplanes to Aerospace: Defense Spending and Economic Growth in the Los Angeles Region, 1945–1960," in Roger W. Lotchin, ed., *Martial Metropolis*. McCone originally was slated to work on the Air Policy Commission's staff. He declined, but then Henry Ford II decided not to serve as a commission member, and President Truman, familiar with McCone's wartime involvement in aviation, asked him to take Ford's place. *Conversation with McCone*, 10. The chain of aircraft plants that ran from San Diego through Los Angeles employed nearly a quarter million workers during the war. "Their function was not unlike that of the mines in the Gold Rush of 1849," one historian has written. Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed*, 25–26. (U)

¹³ *Conversation with McCone*, 13. (U)

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single year of the entire post-World War II period and while the Air Force was mounting a major effort to expand its strategic striking power. McCone's dealings as a defense contractor during World War II enabled him to exert some control over the service's Byzantine acquisition system and public works budget. He campaigned tirelessly for higher appropriations and inspired the crash programs that built the large Strategic Air Command (SAC) complexes in Greenland and North Africa. He pushed for intensive research and development in missiles and wanted to reorganize the military's separate missile programs along a Manhattan Project model under the direction of a "missile czar." He overreached with this proposal, however; interservice rivalries precluded it, and Truman rejected it.¹⁴ (U)

McCone's stint at the Pentagon familiarized him with intelligence processes, bureaucracies, and personalities. He served on a Department of Defense committee on intelligence and later said he "leaned very heavily on CIA... because I always wanted to check the intelligence estimates of the Air Force itself. In this way I got a little look through the side door of CIA." He also knew DCI Walter Bedell Smith and the chief of clandestine operations, Allen Dulles, and met with them often.¹⁵ (U)

McCone saw his primary role as the secretary of the Air Force's general manager, and he rankled Air Force officials and commanders when he tried to employ the same strict administrative methods he used to run his own companies. According to one assistant secretary, McCone was guilty of "throwing his weight around," and a senior member of the Air Staff regarded him as a "know-it-all" who treated high-ranking officers with contempt. McCone challenged the Air Staff's conclusions about the power of nuclear weapons and its plans for new bombers. He usually sided with "young R&D colonels" who were trying to be heard at senior echelons, and he clashed with SAC strategists when he advocated deploying small nuclear weapons for use in "little wars." His tireless constitution, constant demands, and refusal to coun-

tenance failure intimidated many subordinates. A former colleague recalled that when McCone was displeased with an explanation for some lapse, he would take out a pocket watch and twirl it on its chain, the circles speeding up as his anger rose. When the motion became a blur, "that's when the explosion came. You wanted to run for cover."¹⁶ (U)

One of McCone's decisions while with the Department of the Air Force revived the touchy issues of war profiteering and conflicts of interest that he had dealt with only a few years before. In 1951, he awarded a lucrative aircraft construction contract to a company partly owned by Henry Kaiser, the wartime rival with whom he later had undertaken joint ventures. Not only did Kaiser's airplane, the C-119 "Flying Boxcar," cost three times as much as the Air Force had been paying another contractor, but Stephen Bechtel was also a part owner of Kaiser's financially strapped company. Moreover, McCone decided to award the contract without the usual preliminary procedures. When a Senate committee later questioned this haste, McCone replied that "the action, though fast, was proper under the sense of emergency that we were operating." Asked if the process was "even faster than fast," he responded that "it is pretty fast, you bet." This episode left important members of Congress with the perception that McCone, as one Republican representative put it, was "merely on leave of absence from his position as president of the Bechtel-McCone Corporation."¹⁷ (U)

Private Sector Interlude (U)

McCone returned to his business affairs after less than a year and a half at the Pentagon, ostensibly for personal reasons. Along with an Exceptional Civilian Service Award—for his part in doubling US aircraft production during the early months of the Korean War—he also presumably took with him some lessons about how, and how not, to shake up a federal bureaucracy. Once back in his executive offices, McCone embarked on a new phase of entrepreneurship that

¹⁴ Watson, 110–11, 114–15, 124–27; Moody, 381–92; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; *New York Times*, 1 June 1950: 12; 2 June 1950: 15, 34; 10 October 1951: 4; 12 October 1951: 7; 13 October 1951: 6. McCone's home state of California—and especially the aviation and astronautics industries in its southern region—benefited hugely from the military buildup of the 1950s, receiving more than \$50 billion in military spending during the decade. In 1952, the state ranked third in prime defense contracts (worth over \$10,000), with under 13 percent of the total; six years later, it was first with over 21 percent (it also had nearly 24 percent of all contracts). Los Angeles alone received 61 percent of the state's share of US defense outlays. Markusen et al., graphs on 10, tables on 13; James L. Clayton, "Defense Spending: Key to California's Growth," *Western Political Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (June 1962): 280–82, 286. (U)

¹⁵ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. (U)

¹⁶ Watson, 110–11, 114–15, 124–27; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; McCartney, 98. (U)

¹⁷ *Aircraft Procurement: Hearings Before the Preparedness Subcommittee No. 1 of the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, Eighty-Third Congress, First Session, on Contract Award of C-119 Cargo Planes by Air Force, June 2, 3, 4, 5, 23, and 24, 1953*, 5–57, quote on 18. The C-119 later was used as the recovery aircraft for the first CORONA reconnaissance satellite missions. (U)

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Captain of Industry and Technology (U)

made him one of the world's premiere shipping tycoons. In 1952, he assembled a makeshift fleet under the Hendy aegis and entered the ore-carrying trade. More significantly, that same year McCone and Stephen Bechtel joined a partnership with Henry Mercer, owner of States Marine Lines and US Lines, whose vast fleet included the largest unsubsidized American-flag cargo operation afloat. Through this arrangement, McCone's Hendy firm prospered by hauling minerals from South America and the Caribbean and chemicals on the US Intracoastal Waterway.¹⁸ (U)

McCone did not forswear public service, however. After he resigned from the Department of Defense, US policy-makers continued to seek his advice. In 1952, he went on a five-day inspection tour of air facilities in Korea and on his return recommended more rigorous training for American personnel. McCone declined President Dwight Eisenhower's request that he serve as secretary of the Air Force or undersecretary of State—citing congressional criticism of contracts he had awarded while at the Pentagon—but he often was an unpublicized visitor at the White House for private meetings in the presidential residence, and administration leaders solicited his counsel on defense reorganization, the military budget, and dealings with European leaders he knew from his business travels. In 1954, he joined the Department of State's Public Committee on Personnel—better known as the Wriston Committee, after its chairman, Brown University President Henry Wriston—to recommend ways to strengthen and modernize the Foreign Service. McCone's specific assignment was to find ways to break down the institutional and cultural barriers between "elite" career diplomats and Washington-based civil servants. Through an ingenious job reclassification, McCone and colleagues on his working group were able to force circulation between the two cadre of employees—a process at the time dubbed "Wristonization." Serving on the Wriston

Committee enabled McCone to anticipate the problem of bureaucratic cultures he would encounter at CIA.¹⁹ (U)

McCone kept his hand in Republican politics as well during this time. He supported the GOP's internationalist wing in its battle for control of the party in 1952 against the isolationists, led by Ohio Sen. Robert Taft. During the 1956 presidential campaign, he helped raise money in California for the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket and hosted the president for a vacation on the Monterey Peninsula. He caused a local stir when he chastised a group of professors at Cal Tech for defending Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson's proposal to suspend hydrogen bomb tests. Stevenson made nuclear testing an electoral issue, calling it "the greatest menace the world has ever known." Eisenhower condemned his opponent's "strange new formula" as a "theatrical national gesture," and Nixon called it "catastrophic nonsense," but the Cal Tech scientists said Stevenson's idea was "a useful way to get the [disarmament] talks out of the deadlock stage." McCone, who was heading Cal Tech's fund raising program, wrote the professors a scathing letter that revealed what he thought about nuclear testing and how he believed politically conscious academics should comport themselves in a time of global tension:

Your statement is obviously designed to create fear in the minds of the uninformed that radioactive fallout from H-bomb tests endangers life.... Your proposition that postponement of tests will delay the time when other nations might possess practical H-bomb experience...has for several years been a prominent part of Soviet propaganda.

The scientists' support for Stevenson's position so incensed McCone that he resigned from Cal Tech's fund raising drive.²⁰ (U)

¹⁸ McCartney, 97; *Current Biography* 1959, 273; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198. (U)

¹⁹ John McCone oral history (OH) interview by [redacted] Los Angeles, CA, 26 July 1976, 9, 11–13 (hereafter McCone [redacted] OH; transcripts of all oral history interviews are on file in the History Staff unless otherwise noted); "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 198. Columnist Joseph Alsop later wrote that Eisenhower's secretary of defense, Charles E. Wilson, had vetoed the appointment of McCone as secretary of the Air Force because he was "tainted with Trumanism"—i.e., too closely identified with Democratic policies. Alsop, syndicated column, *Washington Post*, 29 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4. Wilson's supposed action is not mentioned elsewhere. The Wriston Committee's report was titled "Toward a Stronger Foreign Service"; copy in *ibid.*, folder 8. (U)

²⁰ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower. Volume II*, 357–60; John Barlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson and the World*, 365–77; Marine, 308. This was not the only time that McCone expressed concern about liberal-left politics at California institutions of higher education. In January 1965, when students at the University of California at Berkeley were protesting administration policies and organizing the Free Speech Movement, he told FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover about his conversation with a conservative university regent (Edwin Pauley) worried about radicals on campus. According to Hoover, McCone said that the regent "is anxious to get a line on any persons who are communists or have communist associations either on the faculty or in the student body[,] and then at a Board of Regents level handle it without disclosing his source." Hoover told McCone that he would have a memorandum, based on publicly available information, sent to the head of the Bureau's Los Angeles office discussing "some of these individuals causing trouble at Berkeley." Hoover memorandum to Clyde Tolson et al., 28 January 1965, Athan Theoharis, ed., *From the Secret Files of J. Edgar Hoover*, 92; "Reagan, FBI, CIA Tried to Quash Campus Unrest," *USA Today*, 8 June 2002, online version at Internet address www.usatoday.com/news/washdc/2002/06/08/reagan.htm. (U)

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CHAPTER 1

Two years later, McCone served as the financial chairman for the unsuccessful 1958 gubernatorial campaign of Sen. William Knowland, who was running against Democrat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. Knowland was the arch-conservative spokesman for the "China Lobby" that supported Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan as the rightful government of mainland China. McCone persuaded many conservative Californians to fill Knowland's coffer, but the Republican—known by detractors as the "Senator from Formosa"—lost decisively to the moderate Brown.²¹ (U)

The wave of fear and anxiety that swept over the United States after the Soviets' surprise launch of the Sputnik satellite on 4 October 1957 energized McCone against the Eisenhower administration's complacent response.²² US officials belittled Sputnik as a "silly bauble," "a hunk of iron," and "one shot in an outer space basketball game." McCone thought differently. He traveled to Washington, sought out Eisenhower and Nixon, and implored them to face the Soviets' achievement squarely or risk political disaster by appearing feckless and indifferent. McCone recalled talking to Eisenhower twice about taking the offensive on the technology front to allay concerns of the sort conveyed by an aide to Senate majority leader Lyndon Johnson:

It is unpleasant to feel that there is something floating around in the air which the Russians can put up and we can't.... It really doesn't matter whether the satellite has any military value. The important thing is that the Russians have left the earth and the race for the control of the universe has started. (U)

The president evidently took the opportunity to apprise McCone of progress in US missile development and the CORONA satellite project. He may also have eased McCone's concerns by letting him know that a special stra-

tegic review panel, the Gaither Committee, had been examining US strategic and civil defense programs since early in the year and was about to issue its report. McCone quickly changed his mind about the need for a Manhattan Project approach to missiles, saying that their development was too far advanced and too compartmented to be reorganized. He advised, however, that a deputy secretary of defense be appointed with sole responsibility for missile programs and authority to integrate the military services' separate efforts. Assured that the administration was on top of the space issue, McCone did not react to the launching of Sputnik II on 3 November with alarm, even though the official US response was as understated as before. (U)

Atom Czar (U)

The most extensive public activity—and, for him, the most personally and professionally formative—that McCone engaged in before becoming DCI was his service as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) from 1958 to 1961. His experiences in managing a high-profile bureaucracy, contributing to the formulation of national security policy, and interacting with political overseers greatly influenced how he would direct the Intelligence Community in the early 1960s. McCone's technical background, conservative Republican credentials, prior government work, and good relations with President Eisenhower all suited him for that post, which Lewis Strauss vacated in June 1958.²³ Strauss had battled constantly with liberal Democrats on the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy over issues ranging from the lagging state of civilian atomic power development to a nuclear test ban. The debate over private versus public development of atomic power was a perennial one, with the administration in favor of giving business the larger role, while congressional Democrats—influenced by the AEC's first chairman, former New Dealer David Lilienthal—wanted the US gov-

²¹ Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics*; Kurt Schuparra, *Triumph of the Right*, chap. 2; David W. Reinhard, *The Republican Right since 1945*, 142–45; Herbert L. Phillips, *Big Wayward Girl: An Informal Political History of California*, chap. 26; Royce Delmatier et al., *The Rumble of California Politics, 1848–1970*, 37–41; Gladwin Hill, *Dancing Bear: An Inside Look at California Politics*, 142–62; Totton J. Anderson, "The 1958 Election in California," *Western Political Quarterly* 12, no. 1, pt. 2 (March 1959): 276–300. Anderson described the Knowland-Brown race as "a choice between a wealthy, arch-conservative, militantly partisan, austere, Protestant Republican and a self-made, middle-of-the-road, relatively unpartisan, friendly, Catholic Democrat" (285). (U)

²² Sources used for this discussion of Sputnik were: Paul Dickson, *Sputnik: The Shock of the Century*, 22, 112, 118–19; Robert A. Divine, *The Sputnik Challenge*, chaps. 1–3; Walter A. McDougall, *The Heavens and the Earth*, chap. 6; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" *Newsweek* 52, no. 28 (14 July 1958): 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8; "AEC Changes Its Top Command," 31–32; Jeffrey Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 18; Arthur Krock, "Origins & Developments of the Missile Program," *New York Times*, 1 November 1957: 26; W.H. Lawrence, "President's Drive to Reassure US Will Open Nov. 13," *ibid.*, 2 November 1957: 1; Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years On the Firing Line*, 320. (U)

²³ McCone met Eisenhower in 1947 when the general was Army Chief of Staff and McCone was on the Air Policy Commission. While he was at the Pentagon in 1950–51, McCone helped Eisenhower prepare for his assignment as commander of NATO and consulted with him after he assumed that responsibility. McCone/DH, 1–5. Eisenhower offered McCone a seat on the AEC in 1957, but he declined, stating that he would accept nothing less than the chairmanship. Richard G. Hewlett and Jack M. Holl, *Atoms for Peace and War, 1953–1961*, 490. (U)

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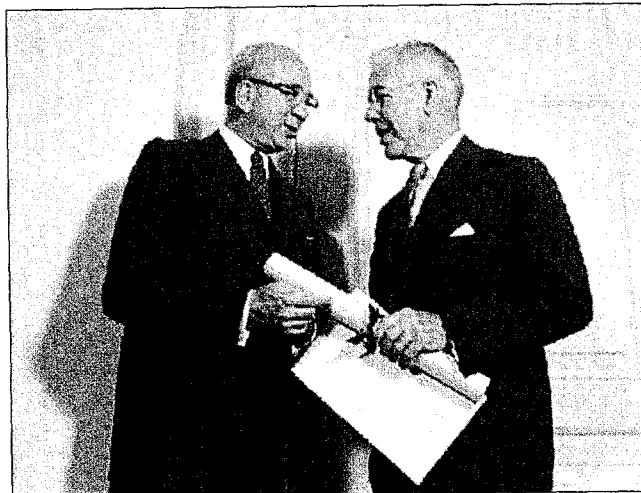
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ernment to take the lead. Democrats were also incensed at what they regarded as Strauss's deviousness, acerbity, and patronizing attitude. Relations between the AEC and Congress had gotten so bad by 1958 that one Commission staffer remarked, "Those guys on the Hill wouldn't accept the Ten Commandments if they were proposed by Strauss."²⁴ (U)

The Eisenhower administration saw McCone—who was first on Strauss's list of suggested successors—as a strong-willed pacificator who would champion Republican probusiness policies without antagonizing congressional Democrats. McCone's nomination generally met with bipartisan approval, but three contentious matters arose at his confirmation hearing before the Joint Committee. One was the "Flying Boxcar" contract with Henry Kaiser, which McCone justified as necessary during a wartime emergency. Another was his outburst against the Cal Tech professors. He tried to distinguish their statement from public comments by Edward Teller of the University of California, who opposed any test ban. Teller, the "father of the H-bomb," was speaking as an authority on nuclear weapons and as an individual, whereas the Cal Tech scientists collectively had used their status as faculty members to inject themselves into a political argument. The chairman of the Joint Committee, Sen. Clinton Anderson, got McCone to concede that the professors had signed their statement as individuals, not as representatives of their university.²⁵ (U)

The third matter—possible conflicts of interest between McCone's financial holdings and AEC affairs—was not resolved as neatly as the others. McCone had warned the White House that this ethics issue might cause a problem. In early June 1958, he wrote Eisenhower's adviser Sherman Adams: "For reasons which I discussed with you, it is not practical for me to divest myself of the ownership of my holdings. Therefore the question of any possible conflict of



Lewis Strauss congratulating McCone at his swearing-in (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

interest must be carefully weighed." On the advice of the Department of Justice, McCone agreed to dispose of his stock in two companies that Bechtel (an AEC contractor) controlled, and said he was willing to do likewise with his holdings in Dow Chemical, Union Carbide, and other firms that did business with the AEC. However, he kept all his stock in the Hendy Corporation, which had dealings with AEC contractors, and put it in a trust with the Bank of California, of which he was a stockholder and director. He retained the power to vote it while he was AEC chairman. "I have done a great deal of soul-searching on that question [of conflict of interest]," he assured the Joint Committee, and clearly believed he could separate his private affairs from his public responsibilities.²⁶ (U)

These brief controversies did not imperil McCone's nomination. The Joint Committee approved it on 2 July 1958, and the Senate confirmed him unanimously a week later. Press coverage was overwhelmingly laudatory. The *New York*

²⁴ "AEC Changes Its Top Command," 31–32; Corbin Allardice and Edward R. Trapnell, *The Atomic Energy Commission*, 160–61; McCone, OH, 13–14, 16; Robert A. Divine, *Blowing On the Wind: The Nuclear Test Ban Debate, 1954–1960*, 9–11, 218–19; Richard Pfau, *No Sacrifice Too Great: The Life of Lewis L. Strauss*, chaps. 11–12. Strauss's main antagonist on the committee was its chairman, Clinton P. Anderson from New Mexico, the Senate's senior Democrat. Strauss's and Anderson's egos and visions clashed in a conflict that became highly personal. Strauss said at the end of his term that "this room [where the committee held hearings] is decorated with my blood." Allardice and Trapnell, 176; Murphy, "Mr. McCone Arrives in Washington," 112. (U)

²⁵ Lewis L. Strauss, *Men and Decisions*, 378; *Hearing Before the Senate Section of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Congress of the United States, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, on the Nomination of John A. McCone to be a Member of the Atomic Energy Commission*, July 2, 1958; Marine, 308; "Atomic Energy's McCone," 16; *Current Biography* 1959, 273; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8, and follow-up articles on 3 July 1958: 6; 10 July 1958: 18; and 15 July 1958: 15; Drew Pearson, "John McCone Did Not Sell His Stock When He Became AEC Chairman..." syndicated column, 17 January 1962; and HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4, Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folders 3–9, and McCone clipping file, HIC, containing many congressional and press items from McCone's DCI confirmation hearings in 1962 at which his AEC nomination was revisited. (U)

²⁶ Marine, 309; "The AEC's 'Quiet Dynamo,'" 52; "Energy for Atoms," *New York Times*, 7 June 1958: 8, and follow-up articles on 3 July 1958: 6; 10 July 1958, 18; and 15 July 1958: 15; Washington *Evening Star*, 15 July 1958, McCone clipping file, HIC; Lawrence K. Houston (General Counsel) memorandum to Allen Dulles, "Conflicts of Interest," 13 October 1961, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3. (U)

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Times ran a glowing profile of McCone entitled "Energy for Atoms." The Washington *Evening Star* called him "the very model of 'modern' Republicanism," and *Time* described him as "handsome, well-knit, [and] professorial-looking." Several periodicals featured his new Regency-style mansion in San Marino, California, and his wife of 20 years, Rosemary (*née* Cooper). He was sworn in as AEC chairman on 14 July. (U)

A Technocratic Approach (U)

Like Lewis Strauss, McCone preferred having the private sector dominate development of nuclear power, but he was not as doctrinaire as his predecessor. The new chairman "was not plagued by Strauss's nagging suspicion that every proposal by the [Joint] Committee's Democratic majority was motivated by a desire to socialize the electric power industry," a historian of the AEC has observed. McCone initially tried to restore some of the apolitical quality the Commission had possessed soon after its inception. He viewed its responsibilities largely in technical and economic terms, sought ideas from many sources, and avoided most of the political and personal controversies that had marred Strauss's tenure. McCone later recalled that he made lasting friendships with several members of the Joint Committee while heading the AEC. He persuaded the legislators that he and the Commission made honest efforts to acquire facts and acted in good faith even when they did not all agree. He showed that he wanted to repair relations with the AEC's constituency by quickly assigning Morse Salisbury—the Commission's public information officer who had many friends in Congress, the press, and other executive agencies—to be a special assistant to the AEC's general manager. McCone's handling of these political and public relations responsibilities suggested some of the approaches he would take toward congressional oversight and publicity while serving as DCI.²⁷ (U)

Not all of McCone's dealings with the Joint Committee were tranquil, however. When one member issued a press release criticizing McCone's statement to the committee before he actually made it, an enraged McCone shouted at Sen. Anderson: "I just don't know why I am here, Mr. Chairman.... If you want me to come up and testify, listen to me, and then make up your mind what you think about what I say." In addition, on a couple of occasions McCone



McCone begins his chairmanship of the Atomic Energy Commission. (U) Photo: Department of Energy

was caught dissembling in public. After a weapons test in Nevada in late 1958 produced an unusually high level of radiation in Los Angeles, McCone said, with comforting exaggeration, "No harm was done, none whatsoever." He later had to defend the AEC against congressional charges that it had suppressed information about the dangers of fallout. In early 1959, a pro-test ban physicist warned that the Commission was testing a polonium-based propulsion system for missiles and satellites. If the nuclear-powered rockets blew up during the trials, a large area would be contaminated for years. At a press conference, McCone minimized the concern by noting that operational models would not use polonium, but he did not mention what other hazardous nuclear fuel would be loaded on them or what its potential effects were.²⁸ (U)

Inside the AEC, McCone "made significant strides in bringing systematic evaluation and planning to bear on the Commission's amorphous and inflated programs," according to a history of the AEC. McCone—like Strauss but unlike earlier chairmen Lilienthal and Gordon Dean—was a strong executive who discouraged other commissioners from indulging personal interests through independent contact with the Commission's technical staff. With a businessman's eye for the

²⁷ Hewlett and Holl, 429, 495, 497, 501, 503ff.; McCone [redacted] OH, 16–18; John McCone oral history interview by [redacted] Los Angeles, CA, 19 August 1970, 3 (hereafter McCone [redacted]); Allardice and Trapnell, 160–61. (U)

²⁸ Marine, 310; "Tough Man, Tough Job," *Newsweek* 58, no. 42, 9 October 1961: 36; Eleanor W. Schoenebaum, ed., *Political Profiles: The Eisenhower Years*, s.v. "McCone, John A(lex)," 397. (U)

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bottom line, he tried to control the burgeoning cost of research in high-energy physics, scrutinized outside scientists' proposals for AEC funds, and made sure that the Commission's scientists conducted applied research instead of entertaining pet ideas. An historian of the AEC has written:

As an engineer, McCone tended to take a jaundiced view of scientists...he understood the indispensable role that scientists played in establishing the base for technological innovation, but he did not quite accept the idea that turning scientists loose in the laboratory to pursue their own interests in basic research was always a good investment for the federal government.²⁹ (U)

At the AEC, McCone got a foretaste of the interagency competition he would face while running the Intelligence Community. As he would find later as DCI, the authority of the AEC chairman cut across traditional departmental lines, forcing him to carefully coordinate and negotiate most of the Commission's important decisions. His two principal adversaries in the executive branch were the Departments of Defense and State. One of the main points of contention with the Pentagon was the extent of civilian control of nuclear weapons assigned to NATO troops in Europe. The Air Force wanted as little civilian control as would satisfy US law, while the Joint Committee sought tight controls to keep a nuclear war from starting accidentally. McCone toured European bases with a special congressional subcommittee and helped tip the balance in favor of a supposedly error-proof system of stringent electronic controls. The White House did not act on the idea then, but the Kennedy administration later accepted the approach that he and the Joint Committee recommended.³⁰ (U)

A major difference McCone had with the Department of State arose over sharing nuclear information with Western European governments. The diplomats took their cue from Eisenhower, who harked back to intelligence and technical cooperation with Great Britain during World War II.

McCone, breaking with the Commission's previous position, pointed out that federal law forbade giving nuclear information to foreign countries and cited concerns about security and proliferation. The Joint Committee had the same reservations, and the issue became another subject of political give-and-take between the AEC, the White House, and Congress. McCone did agree with the administration's policy of advancing aid to Western allies so they could develop their own peaceful atomic programs. In 1958, he signed a treaty with West Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux countries providing a \$135 million American loan and a 20-year supply of uranium for reactor fuel. The agreement also called for a \$100 million trans-Atlantic research effort on nuclear power.³¹ (U)

While at the AEC, McCone worked with CIA on a variety of intelligence matters. As a member of the NSC, he was read in to many clandestine operations dealing with nuclear affairs and was privy to new intelligence about Israel's fledgling nuclear weapons program—particularly the worrisome activity at the Dimona site. (The Eisenhower administration used McCone to put public pressure on Israel by having him appear on *Meet the Press* and provide information to the *New York Times* for a front-page story about the Israeli program.) He sat on the United States Intelligence Board (USIB), the interagency body that set collection requirements for the Intelligence Community and approved national intelligence estimates (NIEs), when assessments dealing with nuclear issues were discussed.

²⁹ Allardice and Trapnell, 65, 176; Hewlett and Holl, 514, 522–24, 527. (U)

³⁰ McCone/ [redacted] OH, 21–22. (U)

³¹ Ambrose, 478; Hewlett and Holl, 537–38; Richard Dudman, "New CIA Chief McCone Has Respect and Friendship in Both Parties," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 28 September 1961, copy in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4; Schoenebaum, 397. (U)

³² Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Allen Dulles letter to McCone, 23 August 1958, Charles P. Cabell (DDCI) letter to McCone, 17 September 1958, Dulles letter to McCone, 29 April 1959, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 15; Dulles letter to McCone, 6 October 1958, [redacted] Hewlett and Holl, 533–34; Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, chap. 5;

Fifty Years of Supporting Operations, 1945–1995

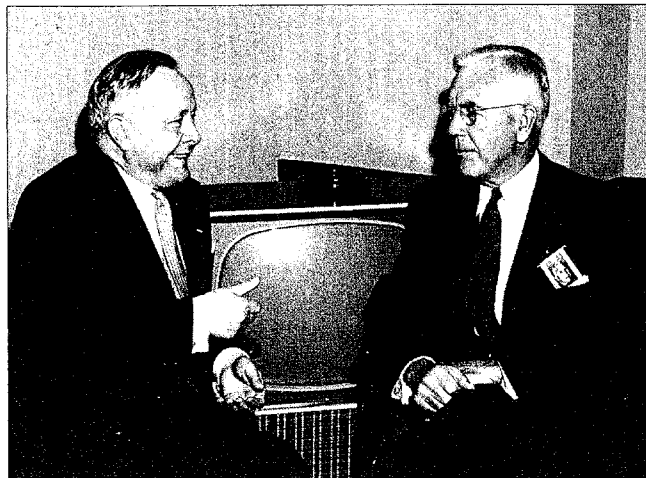
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One of the high points of McCone's chairmanship of the AEC was his visit to the Soviet Union in October 1959—one of a series of scientific exchanges inaugurated in the late 1950s between the two countries. McCone's trip followed his signing with his Soviet counterpart of a "Memorandum on Cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Field of the Utilization of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes." McCone led a delegation of AEC officials and American scientists on a 10-day tour of nuclear facilities in Russia—research institutes, laboratories, reactors, and a uranium mine and ore processing plant—and a voyage on a nuclear-powered icebreaker. McCone's wife and Raymond Garthoff, a CIA analyst functioning as an interpreter and intelligence collector, went along. Soviet security officers kept the American party under close watch—they had learned of Garthoff's CIA affiliation from an agent—and at one point told them not to take snapshots of sites they previously had been allowed to photograph. When McCone asked Garthoff, the most avid picture-taker in the group, to put away his camera, the CIA officer refused, arguing that the features he was photographing were of legitimate interest and had not been declared off-limits until then. "McCone," Garthoff recalled, "was not accustomed to anything but full compliance with whatever position he had taken; indeed, his staff was the most cowed that I have ever seen." He did not press Garthoff further on the matter, however, presumably because the pictures taken might prove useful to analysts.³³ (U)

The trip produced some useful new or collateral intelligence on Soviet nuclear technology and scientists that was reported to the Intelligence Community through CIA channels and to the president by McCone directly. The AEC chairman commented that Soviet nuclear scientists were sufficiently competent that "it is quite clear that their accomplishments are by no means attributable to 'stealing our secrets' although they may have gained marginal advantage from time to time on specific details in this way." Now that he knew how much progress the Soviets had made in the



McCone converses with a Soviet nuclear program official in 1959. (U)
Photo: Department of Energy

nuclear field, McCone suggested that the administration consider applying one of his favorite concepts, centralized organization, to the US program. The AEC, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the nuclear laboratories, and other related entities should be consolidated into a national scientific agency under the leadership of a "science czar." President Eisenhower, however, preferred the existing, less centralized arrangement. A Soviet delegation came to the United States in November 1959 on a reciprocal visit, and McCone met with the head of the Soviet version of the AEC, both alone and with the president. They discussed a range of technical and political issues.

President Eisenhower also used McCone as a policy troubleshooter while he was head of the AEC. In one instance, McCone resolved a dispute between NASA and George Kistiakowsky, the presidential science adviser, on one side, and the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of the Budget on the other, over an expensive plan to develop a missile propulsion system that would enable the United States to

³³ Raymond Garthoff, "Intelligence Aspects of Cold War Scientific Exchanges," *IC&NS* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 1–6; idem, *A Journey through the Cold War*, 90, 93; Glenn T. Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 201. (U)

³⁴ Garthoff, "Intelligence Aspects of Cold War Scientific Exchanges," 8–12, and *A Journey through the Cold War*, 94–95; Garthoff memorandum to Dulles, "Intelligence Acquired During the Visit of Chairman McCone, Atomic Energy Commission, and Delegation to the USSR," 9 November 1959, and Garthoff memoranda, "Conversation Between Chairman John A. McCone, AEC, and Professor V.S. Emelyanov, 19 November 1959," "Memorandum of Conversation Between President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Chairman John A. McCone, and Mr. V.S. Emelyanov..., 24 November 1959," "Memorandum of Conversation Between Chairman John A. McCone, AEC, and V.S. Emelyanov, 24 November 1959," "Comments of Prof. Vasily S. Emelyanov...to an American official in private conversation," November 1959, and "Information Gleaned from the Soviet Atomic Energy Delegation in the United States," 1 December 1959.

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launch vehicles into space. After his own investigation, McCone advised the president that the United States would be shut out of the space race unless he authorized the expenditure. Eisenhower did.³⁵ (U)

McCone ended the AEC's role in the J. Robert Oppenheimer *cause célèbre* in a cleverly managerial fashion that enabled him to affirm his skepticism about the scientist while placating aggrieved Commission personnel. In 1954, the AEC had revoked the security clearance of Oppenheimer, the brilliant and enigmatic "father of the A-bomb." A board of inquiry, handpicked by Lewis Strauss and predisposed against Oppenheimer, had declared him a security risk for associating with known communists and suspected Soviet espionage agents in the 1930s and 1940s and for opposing development of the hydrogen bomb. Oppenheimer had been involved in assorted radical causes before World War II, was an enthusiastic fellow traveler (and possibly also a secret member of the Communist Party USA), and had been "cultivated" by Soviet intelligence. He displayed naiveté and poor judgment in choosing and maintaining social contacts with Soviet sympathizers—some of whom had at least indirect links to Soviet intelligence—while he worked on US atomic projects, but allegations that he passed atomic secrets to the Soviet Union were, and still are, doubtful. The commission board's decision effectively ended Oppenheimer's participation in the nuclear program. Issued during the "Second Red Scare," it upset and demoralized many AEC scientists, who thought their organization had sullied its reputation for technical expertise and objectivity by surrendering to political pressure and joining in an anticommunist "witch hunt."³⁶ (U)

McCone's critical attitude toward Oppenheimer may have been formed or influenced during his service as undersecretary of the Air Force during 1950–51. At that time, the Air Force suspected Oppenheimer's loyalty, opposed his advice about developing tactical atomic weapons to complement strategic bombing, and tried to keep classified information from him. In 1958, in a politically more subdued time, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy indicated that the AEC should reinvestigate the case. McCone did not

want to reopen the controversy and devised a superficially judicious procedure that put the onus on Oppenheimer and his supporters. The chairman set two conditions for ordering a reexamination: new evidence must be available, and Oppenheimer himself must want the case revisited. Neither was so—which McCone undoubtedly knew—and the contentious chapter remained closed. McCone later said that Oppenheimer had committed breaches of security but still deserved the accolades he received for his scientific accomplishments. McCone's apparent fairmindedness impressed AEC scientists and helped raise morale at the Commission.³⁷ (U)

Test Ban Hardliner (U)

The most turbulent issue McCone faced while running the AEC was the nuclear test ban. His experience with it provides valuable insights into the character traits and managerial methods that he would soon exhibit as DCI—especially his force of will, bureaucratic toughness, technical expertise, emphasis on hard data, and use of political allies. Public fears of the dangers from fallout and the potential for nuclear cataclysm intensified as both East and West tested fusion weapons while Cold War tensions worsened. President Eisenhower initially was skeptical of the value and achievability of a test ban and denounced the Soviets for making propagandistic proposals. (U)

By 1958, however, Sputnik-induced political pressure and Eisenhower's own concerns about controlling US military expenditures and restraining the arms race had risen high enough that he decided to propose test ban negotiations with the Soviet Union. He wrote in his memoirs that "my goal was modest...to reach at least a small, enforceable agreement...which might generate confidence for more ambitious plans in this or related fields." The president told McCone that he had "to take some risk" in order to "do away with atmospheric testing, thus eliminating the health hazard, and at the same time...slow down the arms race." After intensive discussion inside the administration and with Western allies, Eisenhower in April 1958 proposed to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev that scientific experts from both countries meet to discuss the technical aspects of

³⁵ McCone [] OH, 32–33. (U)

³⁶ Pfau, chaps. 9–10; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *VENONA: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, 327–30; Gregg Herken, *Brotherhood of the Bomb*, passim, and materials on the book's Web site at www.brotherhoodofthebomb.com/bhbsources/documents/huml; Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, chap. 26; Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel, *The Venona Secrets*, 264–77; Jerrold and Leona Schecter, *Sacred Secrets*, 47–51, 198–206; Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov (with Jerrold L. and Leona P. Schecter), *Special Tasks*, 174–76, 187–90, 193–97, 480; Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood*, 183–85. (U)

³⁷ Rhodes, 530–31; McCone [] OH, 19–21. (U)

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a test ban. Those talks convened in Geneva on 1 July, just before McCone's confirmation. The following month, the president suggested that a series of negotiations begin on 31 October, and he imposed a one-year moratorium on American nuclear tests effective at the same time.³⁸ (U)

Throughout his tenure as AEC chairman, McCone fought what a British official called a "stubborn and ultimately successful rearguard action" against prohibitions on nuclear weapons tests. He said at his confirmation hearing that he supported a test suspension with "adequate and proper safeguards"—despite its circumspect sound, a vague and subjective caveat that could justify opposing almost any agreement. In 1959, he declared publicly that "[i]n my Air Force days, I was devoted to the concept of massive retaliation, and I still am." Underlying McCone's adamant opposition were his strong anticommunist views, distrust of the Soviets, and history of support for and involvement with the military-industrial complex. He did not want to do anything that would aid the Soviets in achieving their objective of an unpoliced ban on all nuclear tests and at the same time give them a major victory in the East-West propaganda war. In addition, McCone had bureaucratic and technical objections. He believed that halting the tests conflicted with the AEC's mission of "insuring that we were making maximum use of our atomic resources and that no other country was getting ahead of us," as he later described the problem. He did all he could to persuade the administration that a test ban would seriously impair the Commission's ability to meet military requirements. He did not believe a comprehensive ban was verifiable using current technology (because small underground explosions could go undetected or be confused with seismic activity), and thought that a reliable control system would take four to five years to create. Meanwhile, McCone believed, the Soviets would continue at least underground testing undetected while talks dragged on and pressure built on the United States to accept a treaty. Time was on the Soviets' side, and McCone did not want Eisenhower to gamble on Soviet good faith. Lastly, much of the

administration's internal debate on the test ban took place against the backdrop of Soviet threats to conclude a treaty with East Germany that would force the Western powers out of Berlin. McCone did not believe the United States should make concessions on nuclear weapons while the German crisis was underway.³⁹ (U)

McCone did not, however, explicitly answer the counter-argument that a test ban would freeze nuclear weapon development at a time when the United States had strategic superiority over the Soviet Union. DCI Allen Dulles used intelligence estimates that the United States had a nuclear advantage to make the "quit while ahead" argument. McCone read the same estimates but reached the opposite conclusion. Especially after his look at Soviet nuclear facilities in 1959, he judged that the US government should build a large margin of protection into its nuclear deterrent. (U)

McCone and his allies in the administration, the military, and Congress did not deter Eisenhower from pursuing some deceleration of the arms race, but in the end they prevailed. No test ban, comprehensive or otherwise, was achieved during Eisenhower's presidency. Opposition from McCone and others, combined with an overambitious American agenda and Soviet negotiating tactics, slowed the talks until the shootdown of Francis Gary Powers's U-2 over Soviet territory in May 1960 made an agreement politically unachievable. McCone remembered that the president "got very angry with me at times" for opposing the administration's nuclear policy so tenaciously. Eisenhower had to remind McCone soon after his confirmation that an AEC chairman was "not concerned with the question of [the] world political position." "He is an operator," the president said privately, "not a foreign policy maker." As head of the AEC, however, McCone functioned very much as a policy-maker, and he knew he could get away with a lot because Eisenhower had always been reluctant to dismiss wayward subordinates. Moreover, McCone proved to be a much more

³⁸ Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, chaps. 5, 6, and 8; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, 352, 474–78; Hewlett and Holl, 546; Harold Karan Jacobson and Eric Stein, *Diplomats, Scientists, and Politicians*, 14–81, 471; Kendrick Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate, 1961–63*, 5–10; Eisenhower letters to Khrushchev, 8 and 28 April 1958, Department of State, *Documents on Disarmament, 1945–1959*, 982–95, 1006–7; Eisenhower statement, "Experts' Report on Detection of Nuclear Tests, August 22, 1958," *ibid.*, 1112. (U)

³⁹ This precis of McCone's views on the test ban is based on: *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, docs. 168, 171, 194, 216, 220, 221, 223, 232, 233, 244, 246, 250, 254, 257; Jacobson and Stein, 246, 249, 540, 543–44, 557; Bernard J. Firestone, *The Quest for Nuclear Stability: John F. Kennedy and the Soviet Union*, 73–74; Dudman; and *Conversation with McCone*, 16. (U)

McCone told US officials that he found it hard not to get impatient with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, who was pushing hard for a test ban. "After all," according to McCone, "one of the reasons the UK is in a position to agree to cease British nuclear weapons development activities is that the United Kingdom is now getting weapons information and submarines from the United States under our bilateral agreement with them." At another point, McCone said that "we and the British are not on the 'same wicket.'" "Memorandum of Conversation...Meeting of Principals: Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations," 6 October 1959, and "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 19 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 784, 904. (U)

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adroit and successful bureaucratic infighter than his predecessor Strauss had been.⁴⁰ (U)

McCone took charge of the AEC just as the president created a new high-level interdepartmental body, the Committee of Principals, to formulate policy on nuclear testing. Its other members were Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (the chairman) and Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy (or their deputies), DCI Dulles, and presidential science adviser James Killian. The president wanted them to work out a consensus on the test ban issue, but the group quickly split into advocates of a ban as a first step toward nuclear disarmament—notably the Dulles brothers and Killian—and supporters of continued testing—McElroy, or more often Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles, and McCone. McCone and Quarles contended that the political advantages of a test suspension did not outweigh the military disadvantages. McCone also on occasion raised the fear that the AEC's best scientists would quit if testing were stopped and that remobilizing the United States' nuclear production infrastructure would waste time and money. He, Quarles, and others fought behind the scenes to block the unity that Eisenhower wanted and forced the administration to make test ban decisions on an ad hoc, day-to-day basis.⁴¹ (U)

Even as Eisenhower was on the verge of announcing an offer to begin negotiations with the Soviet Union on banning all tests, McCone and the Department of Defense proposed a series of tests to evaluate the feasibility of a new antiballistic missile (ABM) system. Although the president canceled the ABM tests, he let the AEC and the Pentagon carry out a battery of low-level trials of other nuclear weapons. The first test occurred the same day Khrushchev accepted Eisenhower's latest offer to negotiate a ban. At the same time, however, the president overrode McCone's objections and had the Committee of Principals draft guidelines for verifying a test ban. McCone also tried, without success, to persuade Eisenhower to continue underground testing because it had potentially valuable peaceful applications—for example, using nuclear charges to extract oil

from deep deposits and to blast tunnels through mountains. Two days before the testing moratorium went into effect, McCone publicly declared that the AEC was ready to resume testing on a moment's notice. He regretted the test ban because it hindered development of new weapons, including the so-called "clean" bomb (a low-radiation, low-fallout device).⁴² (U)

McCone recognized that he had to give some ground as public support for a test ban grew. Realizing that the Geneva talks would continue in any event, he tried to get them to focus on the limited objective of suspending atmospheric testing. The Soviets, he believed, could use the United States' insistence on a comprehensive ban to screen their own delaying tactics—"[i]f we continue to negotiate with the Russians indefinitely...we have accepted a test suspension without an agreement"—and, if the talks broke off, as an excuse to blame the Eisenhower administration for the impasse. McCone was less interested in improving the prospects for an agreement than in upholding the AEC's commitment to control and verification, even if doing so lent some credence to Khrushchev's charge that an on-site inspection system was a "military espionage plan" in disguise. In late January 1959, McCone submitted to Secretary of State Dulles a Commission plan for a phased treaty starting with a ban on above-ground tests, followed by a prohibition on underground tests when a satisfactory detection system was developed. This idea became the basis for the new Western position at the Geneva talks that Eisenhower worked out with the British. The proposal, which the president conveyed to the Soviets in April, was widely interpreted as a victory for McCone and his allies. McCone was pleased that he was making headway inside the administration: "I feel that the AEC's position is *now* pretty well recognized as the proper one by everyone concerned."⁴³ (U)

A further display of McCone's tactical maneuvering came during the "fallout scare" of 1958–59, when studies of the health effects of radioactive fallout alarmed the American people. McCone calculated that he could take advantage of

⁴⁰ McCone, *FRUS*, 18 August 1958, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, III, *National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 648. (U)

⁴¹ Hewlett and Holl, 544–45; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 219; Jacobson and Stein, 85–88, 471; "Record of Meeting...Revision of US Position on First Phase Disarmament," 18 August 1958, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, III, *National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 645–46. (U)

⁴² Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 232, 239; Ambrose, 479–80; Jacobson and Stein, 157–58; McCone letter to Eisenhower, 28 August 1958, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, III, *National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 658–59. (U)

⁴³ "Memorandum of Conversation...US Position in Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations," 30 January 1959, and "Memorandum of Meeting...Meeting on Nuclear Testing," 12 February 1959, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, III, *National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 696–98, 704; Hewlett and Holl, 551–52, 554; Jacobson and Stein, 168–73. (U)

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the popular mood to make both a timely concession on the sensitive issue of atmospheric testing and a more effective case for resuming underground testing. He showed that the AEC was responsive to public concerns by telling the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in June 1959 that "we should give serious consideration to curtailing atmospheric tests for the simple reason of eliminating this fear [of fallout], whether the fear is warranted or not, because it is there." He also pointed out that underground tests were "cleaner" and necessary for providing data on seismic detection. A summer trip to Geneva further convinced McCone of the talks' futility, and he argued even more forcefully that US negotiators should concentrate instead on banning only atmospheric tests because at least that prohibition was enforceable.⁴⁴ (U)

McCone's influence over nuclear policy declined with the arrival of Eisenhower's new science adviser, George Kistiakowsky, in July 1959. Kistiakowsky—a chemistry professor from Harvard who had fought the Bolsheviks and worked on the Manhattan Project—became the administration's chief defender of the test ban and was insistent about revitalizing the Geneva talks. He and McCone quickly took a dislike to each other, and, as a member of the Committee of Principals, the scientist thwarted the AEC chairman whenever he could. At one meeting he even provoked what he described as a "wild reaction" from McCone. The president, seeking time to let the negotiators make progress, extended the moratorium to the end of the year. McCone tried to counter these setbacks by once again going public with his differences. On *Meet the Press*, he said the moratorium should only be continued week by week, and only if the Soviets stopped stalling at Geneva.⁴⁵ (U)




George Kistiakowsky (U)

By the latter part of 1959, political sentiment in the United States had shifted decisively in favor of the moratorium and an eventual comprehensive test ban, so McCone bowed to realities and tried to take the initiative by engineering a compromise between the administration's factions. He suggested that the United States call for a new technical conference to examine recent developments in underground testing that called into question the detection system under discussion in Geneva. If the Soviets declined, or if the conference failed to agree on a more elaborate detection system, McCone proposed that Washington continue the moratorium day by day and not resume underground tests unless Moscow did. McCone was making another opportune concession, or calculating that the Soviets would refuse the latest offer, or both. Kistiakowsky termed McCone's idea "a surprisingly sensible proposal which really represents his complete about-face from last summer," the Department of State endorsed it, and, to the Americans' surprise, the Soviets agreed to discuss the new seismic information.⁴⁶ (U)

The optimism dissipated quickly when the talks broke down, and McCone and the US military stepped up demands that tests resume. Now it was Kistiakowsky's turn to propose a compromise to McCone. Over lunch in mid-December 1959, the scientist suggested a ban on atmospheric tests and underground experiments above a certain explosive threshold, the level to depend on how many on-site inspections the Soviets would permit. McCone had always wanted on-site inspections and found the plan appealing. He won another point at the end of the year when the president announced that even though no breakthroughs in negotiations were likely anytime soon, "we shall not resume nuclear weapons tests without announcing our intention in advance of any resumption"—in effect, McCone's day-to-day approach.⁴⁷ (U)

Eisenhower's determination to reach a more ambitious agreement exceeded McCone's obduracy, and soon the AEC chairman found himself isolated inside the nuclear policy-

⁴⁴ Hewlett and Holl, 555–56; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 248, 256–57, 280, 283–84; Jacobson and Stein, 200; McCone notes of Principals meeting on 5 June 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 696–98, 704; Hewlett and Holl, 749–50. (U)

⁴⁵ Jacobson and Stein, 284–86, 290–91; Hewlett and Holl, 557; McCone  OH, 31; George B. Kistiakowsky, *A Scientist at the White House*, 17–36; Eisenhower, 480. (U)

⁴⁶ Kistiakowsky, 106–9; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 291–93; Hewlett and Holl, 553–54; Jacobson and Stein, 159–62; "Memorandum of Conversation... Nuclear Test Negotiations: Meeting of the Principals...", 17 November 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 797–803. (U)

⁴⁷ Hewlett and Holl, 558–59; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 294–95; "Memorandum of Conversation with President Eisenhower," 29 December 1959, "Memorandum of Conversation... Threshold Proposal for Nuclear Test Negotiations," 12 January 1960, "Memorandum of Conversation... Threshold Proposal for Nuclear Test Negotiations," 19 January 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 816–31. (U)

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making coterie. The president was starting to distrust McCone, viewing him as a departmental advocate and defender of the interests of the nuclear industry. In early February 1960, Eisenhower did not argue when Secretary of State Christian Herter charged McCone with a "bad leak" to the *New York Times* about the administration's threshold approach. When told that McCone's Soviet counterpart wanted to talk to the AEC chairman, Eisenhower said he would allow that "so long as Mr. McCone is thoroughly indoctrinated [in US policy] and there is no danger of his going off on his own."⁴⁸ (U)

On 11 February 1960, the president announced that he would accept a treaty that ended all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, oceans, and outer space, as well as underground tests that could be monitored. Favorable domestic reaction to the announcement, indications of Soviet willingness to make concessions on inspections, and a sense of urgency resulting from France's first atomic test (just after Eisenhower's statement) helped end the longstanding split within the administration. At a 23 March meeting of the Committee of Principals to discuss a draft policy statement, McCone lost the support of the Pentagon, which now saw an advantage to opening up the Soviet Union to limited international inspection. "McCone is violently opposed," Herter wrote; the AEC chairman contended that parts of the draft were "[a] complete acceptance of what the Soviets proposed." When McCone voiced his objections the next day at the White House, he received an embarrassing rebuke from the president—the second time in as many months that Eisenhower had put him in his place. A few weeks before, after McCone gave what Kistiakowsky called "a rather emotional speech" about the inadequacy of the US nuclear deterrent and demanded a much larger missile program and a full B-52 alert, the president "firmly" said he "would not accept" that position because such a buildup "would so disrupt the national economy that only a highly regimented society or an armed camp could result." Now, after hearing McCone once more make his case against a long-term moratorium on underground testing, Eisenhower had had enough. According to Kistiakowsky, he unleashed his formidable temper,

pounded the table, and, in a "sharp voice," rejected McCone's point of view, particularly his suggestion that the agreement was "a surrender of our basic policy."⁴⁹ (U)

McCone told Lewis Strauss that he was "pretty damned sore" about the treatment he was getting, but his irritation seemed only to make him more determined not to be outdone. He worked quietly with the administration's opponents in Congress to raise doubts about the test ban proposal and to suppress hopes about the Eisenhower-Khrushchev summit scheduled for mid-May in Paris. Some sources at the time claimed that McCone was the prime mover behind hearings that the Democrat-controlled Joint Committee on Atomic Energy held in April 1960. (The Democrats at this time were criticizing the administration for allowing a "missile gap" to develop.) McCone, figuring that the Soviets must be testing nuclear weapons in secret, regarded the administration's latest proposal as a "national peril" that might force him to resign from the AEC. After the Powers U-2 incident poisoned the atmosphere at the Paris summit, McCone advised Eisenhower to break off the negotiations in Geneva and authorize new underground tests. The president did not do so. Instead, after returning to Washington, he said that there would be no change in US policy. Over McCone's familiar objections, he stated that the United States would refrain from nuclear testing and continue to seek a test ban treaty at Geneva, even though he knew that the U-2 shootdown had ended any chance for an agreement during his presidency. The Soviet Bloc delegation walked out of the talks on 27 June. After meetings resumed later in the year, the negotiators marked time until a new administration took office.⁵⁰ (U)

Au Revoir (U)

McCone also marked time after John F. Kennedy's victory in the November presidential election. (He voted for Richard Nixon and consoled the GOP loser by writing, "Let's look forward to 1964.") Although Kennedy supported a moratorium on nuclear testing and efforts to negotiate a test ban treaty, as a senator he had been impressed

⁴⁸ "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 2 February 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy: Arms Control and Disarmament*, 833–34. (U)

⁴⁹ Eisenhower's statement in Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1960*, 727; "Memorandum of Conversation... Geneva Nuclear Test Negotiations: Meeting of Principals," 23 March 1960, and "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 24 March 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy: Arms Control and Disarmament*, 850, 862; Kistiakowsky, 243, 282; Ambrose, 562–65; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 300–301; Eisenhower, 480–81; Hewlett and Holl, 560; Jacobson and Stein, 245–46. To preempt public dissent from administration officials—such as McCone had expressed previously—the president also directed that they clear speeches on the test ban with the Department of State. Secretary Herter, on White House orders, promptly vetoed a speech McCone was scheduled to give that week. McCone protested, pointed out flaws in White House reasoning, and was allowed to give an amended address. Krock, *Memoirs*, 296–97. (U)

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with McCone's knowledge of the Soviet nuclear program and indicated that he wanted McCone to remain at the AEC for at least six months to a year. McCone—who repeated his criticisms of the moratorium in an interview with *US News and World Report* in December—did not want to put himself in a dissenting position with the new administration from the outset. While not explicitly refus-

ing to serve out his term, he replied to the president-elect by proposing three possible successors. Kennedy took the hint. After the inauguration, he selected one of McCone's choices: Glenn Seaborg, a chemist and Nobel laureate then serving as chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. After Seaborg's installation at the AEC, McCone returned to private life, with every intention of staying there.⁵¹ (U)

⁵⁰ Hewlett and Holl, 560–61; Kistiakowsky, 290–91, 335; Ambrose, 567; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 306–10, 313–14; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files," 18 May 1960, and "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 879–81; Khrushchev letter to Eisenhower, 27 June 1960, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1960*, 703–4; McCone, [redacted] OH, 31. McCone traveled to the United Kingdom in August to discuss the future of the Geneva talks with Prime Minister Macmillan and other British officials. "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," 19 August 1960, *FRUS, 1958–1960, III, National Security Policy; Arms Control and Disarmament*, 901–4. (U)

⁵¹ Michael R. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963*, 417; Herbert Scoville (Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence) memorandum to Allen Dulles, "Comments on US News and World Report Interview with John A. McCone," 26 December 1960, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 34, folder 2; McCone, [redacted] OH, 5–6; McCone, [redacted] DH, 7–28; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; John Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 129. McCone was mentioned as a nominee for secretary of defense had Nixon won the election. "CIA's New Boss," *Time* 78, no. 38 (6 October 1961): 22. (U)

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Setting a New Course (I): Director of CIA (U)

This is a hell of a way to learn things," President John Kennedy fumed after the disaster at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.¹ "But I have learned one thing from this business—that is, that we will have to deal with CIA. McNamara has dealt with Defense; Rusk has done a lot with State; but no one has dealt with CIA." Kennedy, who had been so impressed by the Agency's talent and competence when he first took office—"If I need some material fast or an idea fast, CIA is the place I have to go"—decided that he could no longer trust his intelligence professionals. He could not understand how such brilliant men as DCI Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director for Plans, could have been so wrong. "[Y]ou always assume intelligence people have some secret skill not available to ordinary mortals." Intensifying the president's frustration was his awareness that he had gone against his instincts and fallen into a trap of his own making. "All my life I've known better than to depend on the experts. How could I have been so stupid to let them go ahead?" (U)

Kennedy would not be guilty of such misplaced faith again. He started relying more on his brother Robert, White House staffers Theodore Sorensen and Richard Goodwin, national security adviser McGeorge Bundy, and military adviser Gen. Maxwell Taylor. He also took steps to diminish CIA's independence by transferring more responsibility for paramilitary operations to the military, reinvigorating the NSC's Special Group, which oversaw covert actions, restricting the size of the DDP presence overseas, and threatening to cut the Agency's budget. A variety of proposals circulated to reorganize and downsize CIA, including some that subsumed it under an interagency Cold War strategic planning group, separated its overt functions from its clandestine undertakings, changed its name, and housed the next DCI in the Executive Office Building instead of at Langley. (U)

The president would not go that far, but he did decide that he had to have his own man in charge of CIA. He

regarded Dulles, the "Great White Case Officer," as "an icon of the past, a man with too imposing a reputation for the younger men of the administration to challenge," in journalist David Halberstam's words. Kennedy remarked that

[i]t's not that Dulles is not a man of great ability. He is. But I have never worked with him, and therefore I can't estimate his meaning when he tells me things.... Dulles is a legendary figure, and it's hard to operate with legendary figures.... I must have someone there with whom I can be in complete and intimate contact—someone from whom I know I will be getting the exact pitch.

The president would not move precipitously, however; having accepted responsibility for the Bay of Pigs botch, he did not want to appear to be shifting the blame by cashiering his intelligence chief. In talks with him during the ensuing weeks, Dulles remembered that "while I did have a feeling that maybe he thought I had let him down, there never was one harsh or unkind word said to me by him at any time thereafter." Also, Kennedy observed, Republicans would be less inclined to attack the administration for mishandling Cuba as long as Dulles, an Eisenhower appointee, was still around. The DCI's departure, nevertheless, was only a matter of when and how. In August, President Kennedy asked Bissell and Dulles to come separately to the White House. He told Bissell that "[i]f this were a parliamentary government, I would have to resign. But being the system of government it is, a presidential government, you will have to resign." Bissell later said the president's statement "did not surprise me or in any way outrage me. I thought it was more or less to be expected." Kennedy may have said much the same thing to Dulles, who the next day told his executive assistant, "I've been fired."² (U)

¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Robert Amory oral history at JFK Library, in [redacted] ed., *Spymasters: Ten CIA Officers In Their Own Words*, 157; National Security Action Memoranda [NSAM] Nos. 55 and 57, 28 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 109-10, 112-13; Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days*, 296-97, 428; idem, *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, 452, 458-60; Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 78-80; James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 62-63; Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure*, 155-60. (U)

² Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy*, 530-34; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 152; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 276, 290; Richard M. Bissell with Jonathan E. Lewis and Frances T. Pudlo, *Reflections of a Cold Warrior*, 191; Herbert S. Parmet, *JFK: The Presidency of John F. Kennedy*, 212; Wayne G. Jackson, "Allen Welsh Dulles as Director of Central Intelligence, 26 February 1953-29 November 1961," CIA Historical Staff Study No. DCI-2, 5 vols. (1973; declassified 1994), vol. 4, 132-35 (copies of this and all internal CIA histories are on file in the History Staff unless otherwise indicated). (U)

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CHAPTER 2

A Call from the President (U)

John McCone was not the president's first choice to succeed Dulles.³ For a while Kennedy considered several candidates, including his brother Robert, the attorney general; Maxwell Taylor; and, by some accounts, capital insider Clark Clifford. Picking the attorney general would not only spell the end of "plausible deniability," but the family tie might suggest that the Kennedys were bent on outdoing the Dulleses. Neither Taylor nor Clifford wanted the job. Fowler Hamilton, a Wall Street lawyer and occasional federal official, was highly recommended and nearly nominated, but Dulles and Bissell thought that choice was "appalling."⁴ Roger Hilsman, director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) at the Department of State, suggested the number-two man in the DDP, Richard Helms, but he was little known outside the Intelligence Community and was not high enough in the CIA hierarchy to vault to the top. Other names circulating in mid-September included Republican congressman Gerald Ford of Michigan; Max Millikan, an economics professor from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and former director of CIA's Office of Research and Reports (ORR); and Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, President Eisenhower's military adviser. Around that time, either Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense who had known McCone since their days together at the Pentagon in the early 1950s, or Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, a Democratic advocate of strong defense policies, or both, proposed McCone.⁵

McCone was not close to the Kennedys at this time. He had met John Kennedy two or three times between 1958 and 1961, when they were, respectively, chairman of the AEC and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Their contacts up to then had been brief, either on social occasions or during committee meetings, and they had exchanged only a few words in the months since the inauguration. President Kennedy vetted McCone's name

with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Sen. Clinton Anderson of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and Allen Dulles. Robert Kennedy urged the president to appoint McCone because of his reputation as a tough but respected executive—just the type of leader the White House believed the mismanaged and dispirited CIA needed.⁵

In early September 1961, McCone recalled, President Kennedy asked him to write a brief assessment of the consequences of recent Soviet hydrogen bomb tests. The president said that because the AEC and the Pentagon differed about aspects of US nuclear policy, he wanted an independent view. When McCone delivered his report two weeks later, the president—after abruptly changing their noontime appointment in the Oval Office to an evening meeting in the private residence upstairs—asked him to become DCI. "This came as a complete surprise to me," McCone remembered, "because no one had opened up the subject with me, I had had none of the usual feelers, no interviews had been conducted...no rumors had appeared in the press—this in effect came out of the blue." McCone later concluded that at their previous interview, Kennedy was "covertly and without disclosure to me...doing a little exploring of my thought processes." "We spent about an hour and a half together, and he discussed, with the greatest persuasion—and he was a very persuasive man—the importance of the work of the DCI and his need for someone in whom he had confidence to take the job.... [H]e reached the conclusion that he had that confidence in me" and asked for a decision within a week.⁶ During the next few days, the prospective appointee talked to his wife, the outgoing DCI, and political friends such as Sen. Anderson, settled private business affairs, and then called the president at Hyannis Port to accept. (S)

Why did John Kennedy, who had made such a point of portraying his administration as youthful, vibrant, and

³ Principal sources about McCone's appointment as recounted in this section are: Elder, "John A. McCone as DCI (1973)," 7–12; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 57–59; Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 20 September 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 33; Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 630–31; Edwin O. Guthman and Jeffrey Shulman, eds., *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words: The Unpublished Recollections of the Kennedy Years*, 253; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 459.

⁴ According to Robert Kennedy, during World War II Hamilton had worked with another official who passed important information to the Soviets. Hamilton was not involved in the security breach, but the administration was concerned that British suspicions about him would affect the US-UK intelligence relationship. *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 253. (U)

⁵ McCone first met Allen Dulles when he was invited to a dinner at Dulles's New York home on election night in 1948. Grose, 290. (U)

⁶ McCone, OH, 7; *Conversation with McCone*, 17, 19–20; Walter Elder memorandum concerning McCone's meeting with the SOS Club on 21 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1. McCone appeared on a television show on 4 September 1961 to discuss the Soviets' recently renewed underground tests. His comments, which coincided with the administration's position, were brought to the attention of President Kennedy, who then said he wanted to meet with McCone. *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 161. Clinton Anderson, a senatorial friend of McCone's from AEC days, said "I did everything I could to get him to take it [the DCI position]." *Butte Montana Standard*, 30 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC.

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visionary, in contrast to the materialistic complacency of the graying Eisenhower generation, choose as his DCI a 59-year-old conservative Republican businessman and friend of the previous president?⁷ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., historian and White House staffer, has written that Kennedy and his national security advisers "sought, not an intellectual oracle, but a sensible and subdued manager" with demonstrated administrative abilities, a disinclination to wild adventures, and political connections in the Republican Party and Congress. Despite the Bay of Pigs debacle, the White House was still wedded to the use of covert action and planned to employ CIA aggressively, especially in the Third World. Now, however, the president wanted to make sure that the clandestine stratagems he and his policymakers devised would be properly managed and convincingly presented and defended to the political opposition. To the White House, McCone's inexperience with clandestine operations was no hindrance, while his executive abilities and conservative GOP politics were his strongest assets. Moreover, by appointing a Republican from the business sector, Kennedy could claim to be marking yet another difference between him and the Eisenhower/Dulles brothers approach: the administration of US intelligence would be above partisan politics and insulated from family connections to senior officials.⁸ (U)

McCone's hardline views on the Cold War were as much to the point as his conservative Republicanism. His attitudes toward the Soviet Union mirrored those of many of Kennedy's national security advisers—a number of whom had served on the Gaither Committee, whose 1957 report constituted a "call to arms" against the Soviet threat. McCone thus became part of what historian David Kaiser has termed "a carefully balanced foreign policy team" that had "a relatively young and innovative group" situated on "a broad political base" of world-wise establishmentarians.⁹ (U)

Anticipating opposition from inside his administration, Kennedy confided his selection of McCone only to a handful of political intimates. According to McCone, the president told him to keep the nomination secret because "if these liberal s.o.b.'s that work in the basement of this build-



ing [the White House] hear that I am talking to you about this, they'd destroy you before I can get you confirmed." When idealistic New Frontiersmen did hear, they were appalled that their president had picked an arch-conservative Republican, alleged war profiteer, and opponent of arms control. The reaction of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. to reports of McCone's nomination typified the attitude of many of them:

Mr. McCone, for all his able administrative qualities, is a man of crude and indiscriminating political views (or, to put it more precisely, political emotions). He sees the world in terms of a set of emotion-charged stereotypes. Nothing in his record suggests that he has the ability to make the subtle distinctions without which an intelligence operation loses all meaning....

⁷ "[Kennedy's] appointments were young," diplomatic historian Lawrence Freedman has noted. "[T]he average age of the most senior group was under 50. There were more professors than businessmen, and a number of lawyers. Many were neophytes, without much experience in foreign policy or a grasp of its nuances." Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 39. (U)

⁸ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 429; Parmet, 212; Ranelagh, 410. (U)

⁹ David L. Sneed, *The Gaither Committee, Eisenhower, and the Cold War*, 174, 176; David Kaiser, "Men and Policies, 1961-69," in Diane B. Kunz, ed., *The Diplomacy of the Crucial Decade*, 13. (U)

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CHAPTER 2

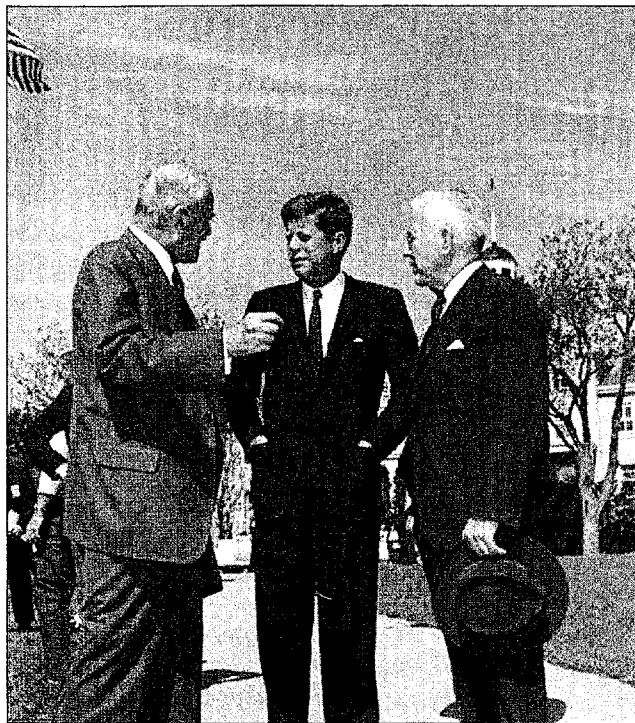
A good test for any proposed CIA director is: what would he have recommended about Cuba? My guess is that, if McCone had been head of CIA in March, we would have got, not a discriminating and careful advocacy of the Cuban operation, but an emotional and moralistic presentation. I would consider him far less inclined than Mr. Dulles to weigh the political significance of proposed clandestine operations....

I greatly fear that McCone's appointment would be the source of continuing mischief, grief and bad counsel for the administration.

None of Kennedy's subordinates, however, broke publicly with the administration over McCone's selection.¹⁰ (U)

A potentially more troublesome source of resistance was the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), which McCone's selection caught by surprise. Besides feeling slighted that the White House had not consulted them, some PFIAB members who had worked with the Eisenhower administration also were disturbed because McCone persistently opposed the previous president's efforts to achieve a nuclear test ban, and feared that as DCI he might slant estimates to conform to his strong anticommunist views. PFIAB's chairman, James Killian—the president of MIT and one of the country's preeminent scientists—threatened to resign from the Board and publicly oppose McCone's appointment. Robert Kennedy later claimed that his intervention, and possibly a meeting between McCone and Killian, prevented a messy spat. The president also asked Agency covert action officer (and former next-door neighbor) Cord Meyer for advice on how to soothe the disquietude over McCone that he expected from Dulles loyalists at CIA.¹¹ ~~(S)~~

Kennedy announced McCone's appointment at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, on 27 September 1961, a week and a half after offering him the



Allen Dulles, John F. Kennedy, and McCone in Newport, RI (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

job. McCone recalled sitting with the president on the porch of the main house at the nearby Auchincloss estate, Hammersmith Farms, just before the announcement. The president asked him if he had any last-minute matters to raise. McCone said he was highly unlikely to change his widely known suspicions about the Soviet Union and that he did not want to be merely the president's special assistant for intelligence or have anyone else in the administration assuming the role of national intelligence officer. Kennedy said he understood McCone's views on both points. After the announcement, the president continued discussing CIA matters with McCone and Dulles while sailing around Narragansett Bay on the family yacht, the *Honey Fitz*.¹² (U)

Most politicians and pundits applauded McCone's nomination.¹³ The main theme of the favorable commentary was

¹⁰ *Conversation with McCone*, 20; Halberstam, *Best and the Brightest*, 152–54; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 429; McCone, *OH*, 30; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 254; *Washington Post*, 23 October 1961, A10, copy in McCone clipping file, folder 1, HIC; McGeorge Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy; Information Policy; United Nations; Scientific Matters*, 188; Schlesinger memorandum to President Kennedy, "John McCone," 27 September 1961, Schlesinger Papers, JFK Library. (U)

¹¹ James R. Killian oral history interview by [redacted] Cambridge, MA, 2 November 1984 (hereafter Killian, *OH*), 28–29; Nina Burleigh, *A Very Private Woman*, 204. (U)

¹² "Remarks in Newport Upon Announcing the Appointment of John McCone as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, September 27, 1961," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 631–32; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 12–13. (U)

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that McCone's business background and political connections would enable him to make the changes needed to restore the demoralized, disorganized, and oversized CIA to its earlier level of competence and capability. The *New York Times* encapsulated the viewpoint of the major Eastern media when it editorialized that McCone "has shown in his past governmental posts that he has the qualities needed for effective performance in Washington: high administrative ability, driving energy and the capacity to get along well with Congress." Well-known *Times* columnists James Reston and Arthur Krock opined that McCone's selection was part of President Kennedy's effort to build a "competent, undramatic and nonpartisan" team of national security advisers drawn from a crisis-tested elite. *Newsweek* called the nominee "a model of well-directed, deliberate energy" and quoted a friend who described him as "a quiet-spoken dynamo...even-tempered, orderly...a conservative dresser with the mien of a banker; a precisionist who carries a memo book and tears off the slips as each job is completed."¹⁴ (U)

Loud objections to McCone emanated from some liberal and leftwing circles.¹⁵ They criticized McCone's strong anti-communism, resistance to a nuclear test ban, close ties to big business, and possible conflicts of interest between his corporate ventures and official duties. The *New Republic*, in several biting pieces on McCone, wrote that he "is not exceptionally gifted with the capacity for cool and unprejudiced judgment" and concluded that making him DCI was like "employing a tone-deaf piano tuner." Two prominent scientists, George Kistiakowsky and Jerome Weisner—the former and current presidential science advisers, respectively—disapproved of McCone because he had worked against a test ban. Second- and third-level officers at the Department of State involved with intelligence estimates on

nuclear energy voiced the same objection, regarding McCone as an "operator" whose loyalty to the administration would be questionable. The Democratic Party's elder statesman, Harry Truman, with characteristic bluntness, called Dulles's dismissal "a God damn shame" and attributed the leadership shuffle to a young, inexperienced administration kowtowing to public and media pressure. Other Democrats thought Kennedy already had appointed too many Republicans to senior posts. Further to the left, journalist I.F. Stone declared that McCone was "an appalling choice," "as satisfactory to the far right as J. Edgar Hoover himself." Two of the United States' main foreign antagonists also weighed in. Moscow Radio disparaged McCone as "a big industrialist," and Radio Havana called him "another traditional agent of the powerful imperialist exploiter consortiums." Less ideological critics asserted that McCone's dual role at the AEC as policymaker and administrator was inappropriate experience for the head of CIA at that juncture. What the Agency needed, the argument ran, was a professional manager and technician rather than a policy-oriented advocate.¹⁶ (U)

Entering On Duty (U)

McCone wanted to spend several weeks familiarizing himself with his new responsibilities before he formally took over. On 13 October 1961, he joined CIA as a consultant, pending his swearing-in, and immediately began a whirl of activities to get up to speed. That same day, he left with Bissell to tour CIA stations in the Far East [redacted]

[redacted] He returned 10 days later and started a series of meetings and briefings with Agency and other government officials. In late October, he left with Dulles for two weeks to visit [redacted] London, Paris,

¹³ A large sample of representative opinion is in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folders 1, 4, and 8; and McCone clipping file, folders 1 and 2, HIC. Unless otherwise indicated, press items cited in this section come from those files. (U)

¹⁴ *New York Times*, 28, 29, 30 September and 1 October 1961; articles in *Washington Post*, 28 September 1961; "CIA's New Boss," *Time*, 6 October 1961; "Tough Man, Tough Job," *Newsweek*, 9 October 1961. On the theme of bipartisanship, Krock noted that McCone was one of 40 Republicans among Kennedy's 250 political appointees. "Kennedy's Republicans," *New York Times*, 1 October 1961. Dwight Eisenhower disapproved of McCone's selection, perhaps because he did not like Kennedy's tactic of appointing Republicans to lend bipartisan respectability to the new administration. The general wrote McCone: "This morning's news says that you have accepted the post of Director of the CIA. As you know, I was not in favor of it, but certainly I want you to know that I shall be wishing you every possible success in the post." Eisenhower letter to McCone, 27 September 1961, quoted in Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 417. (U)

¹⁵ Much of this commentary is compiled in Stanley Grogan's memoranda to McCone, 10 and 11 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. See also Chalmers M. Roberts, "McCone Selection Criticized by Some," *Washington Post*, 23 October 1961. (U)

¹⁶ "The Miscasting of McCone," *New Republic*, 9 October 1961; "Why John McCone?," *ibid.*, 23 October 1961; "McCone on Fallout," *ibid.*, 6 November 1961; "Case of the Missing Clues," *ibid.*, 20 November 1961; Roberts, "McCone Selection Criticized by Some"; Grogan untitled memorandum to Dulles, 19 October 1961, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106; Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 188; "An Appalling Choice to Head the CIA," *I.F. Stone's Weekly* 9, no. 37 (9 October 1961): 1, and "(Triply) Biased Intelligence Guaranteed," *ibid.* 10, no. 4 (29 January 1962): 1; Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), "Communist Comment on the Appointment of a New Director of Central Intelligence," 6 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC. In 1963, the Soviets published a clumsily written propaganda piece about McCone titled *No. 1 Spy: A Pamphlet about the Chief of U.S. Intelligence, John Alex McCone* (Moscow: State Publishing House for Political Literature, 1963). (U)

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CHAPTER 2

Bonn, and Rome—and to meet with counterparts in the British, French, and German services, US military commanders, and local political and military officials. He discussed policy matters with senior leaders [redacted]

[redacted] and their suspicions about CIA made the meetings awkward, introducing McCone to the tensions inherent in intelligence diplomacy and to [redacted]

[redacted] Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (MI-6) was still reeling from the arrest that spring of KGB mole George Blake; French President Charles de Gaulle's intelligence deputies imagined that the Agency was helping rightist French officers in Algeria plot against the government; and, in probably the most disconcerting encounter of all, McCone met Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, the head of the West German external service, the day that its counterespionage chief, Heinz Felfe, was exposed as a Soviet agent.¹⁷ ~~X~~



Chief Justice Earl Warren, McCone, and President Kennedy at McCone's swearing-in ceremony (U)

faculty club collegiality. Besides immersing himself in the substantive details of the job, McCone took a keen—and, to those involved, disruptive—interest in the construction of the new Headquarters complex that would carry over into the first months of his directorship. He was accustomed to deciding what decor and accouterments his corporate and government offices would have, and although he reportedly was “very well pleased with the building” after seeing it for the first time, he countermanded a number of the instructions that Dulles had given.¹⁹ The edifice was being fashioned in sections that components occupied as the work was finished. Dulles had wanted to move in last, so the executive suites were not scheduled for completion until after the rest of the building was filled. McCone, however, announced that he would move into the new building the day he was sworn in and directed that temporary space for him and his staff be ready by then. Meanwhile, he rearranged the architecture of the director's office: walls were moved, furniture switched, and paneling ordered; the intercom system, which Dulles intended to allow senior managers to talk to him without going through secretaries and assistants, was taken out; and a monitoring and recording system was reconfigured. McCone complained about damage caused by movers

On a few occasions during this interregnum, McCone displayed the forceful and often curt leadership style that contrasted so vividly with Dulles's relaxed manner. It was clear to any observer that boardroom efficiency had replaced

¹⁷ Jackson, “Dulles as DCI,” vol. 4, 136; McCone personnel file no. 35335, Office of Personnel Files, Job 88-00296R, box 1, folder 8; Elder, “McCone as DCI (1973),” 13–14; Elder memorandum about Dulles-McCone telephone conversation on 20 October 1961 and undated “Schedule for European Trip,” DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; UPI and AP wire reports, 6 November 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 1; memoranda about McCone-Dulles meetings in Britain, 29 October–2 November 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; memoranda about McCone-Dulles meetings in Germany, 7 and 13 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 34, folder 30; Grose, 537. Dulles arranged for McCone to be paid a consulting fee at a rate equivalent to the director's salary of \$21,000 a year. Lawrence K. White (Deputy Director for Support) diary notes for 9 October 1961, HS Files, HS/HC-849, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 9. ~~87~~

¹⁹ The DDS, Lawrence K. “Red” White, later recalled that McCone “never liked the Headquarters Building or at least he said he didn’t. And he ate me up any number of times about what a terrible place it was. I never could quite reconcile that with the fact that almost once a week he would bring some visitor out to show it off.” Dino Brugioni [redacted] Lawrence K. White on the Directors,” *Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 11. (U)

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and wanted a closed circuit television link with the White House installed as well. While on the European trip, he went on an excursion alone and commandeered the only available security escort without informing Dulles. When a COS told that to Dulles, he stroked his mustache and said, "Extraordinary...*Extraordinary!*" Moments before McCone formally took office, he turned to Deputy Director for Support (DDS) Lawrence K. White and asked about the status of something he wanted done. "Red" White said a delay had arisen. McCone replied, "That isn't good enough. See that it's done promptly."²⁰ ~~XXXX~~

McCone's swearing-in took place on 29 November in the Cabinet Room at the White House. As McCone had requested, Chief Justice Earl Warren performed the ceremony. Among the officials invited were Secretary Rusk; the chairman of the JCS, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer; and McCone's successor as chairman of the AEC, Glenn Seaborg. With due humility, McCone said he was "not unmindful of the very difficult task it will be, following in the footsteps of Allen Dulles," but that he was "encouraged and given hope" because he had found the people at CIA to be "of both great dedication and unusual ability," and that with their support he could meet the president's expectations. Afterward, President Kennedy gently warned the new DCI that he was "now living on the bull's eye, and I welcome you to that spot." McCone immediately left for Langley and started his directorship from a temporary suite set aside for him on the third floor.²¹ (U)

The First 100 Days (U)

Perhaps the overriding leadership challenge McCone initially faced was dealing simultaneously with the Kennedy administration's romance with clandestine operations and its loss of faith in intelligence generally, and CIA specifically, after the Bay of Pigs. The White House's enchantment with covert action and counterinsurgency has been described amply in numerous histories, biographies, and memoirs and will be treated in later chapters of this study. It is sufficient to say here that the Kennedy brothers and their advisers had an exaggerated sense of the potential of covert action and paramilitary operations, and wanted CIA to retain its ability to conduct shadow warfare alongside the military's special forces. At the same time, however, they were disillusioned with intelligence professionals and looked outside the Agency for advice and expertise in the "black arts." (U)

The administration's attitude meant that McCone had to change procedures and personnel in the DDP to refine the Agency's covert capabilities and avoid another operational fiasco, while ensuring that CIA did not get swept up in a global clandestine crusade by an administration fixated on "action"—especially of the secret sort. The Agency recovered some of its standing with the president before McCone's arrival with the revelations of Oleg Penkovskiy, a Soviet military intelligence officer who provided the United States and Great Britain with highly sensitive information on Soviet strategic weapons. Still, McCone faced lingering dissatisfac-

²⁰ Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr., *The Real CIA*, 235–36; Peyton F. Anderson and Jack B. Pfeiffer, "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," in Michael Warner and Scott A. Koch, eds., *Central Intelligence: Fifty Years of the CIA*, 145; Sheffield Edwards (Director of Security) memorandum to Lyman B. Kirkpatrick (Executive Director), "DCI Monitoring System," 13 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 1; Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 160; Ranelagh, 415; Grose, 537–78; White diary notes for 4 January, 26 September, 24 October, 18, 21, and 28 November 1961; David Atlee Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 118–19. ~~XXXX~~

The terse exchange between McCone and White at the swearing-in may have involved the latter's failure to acquire on time the Cadillac limousine the DCI-designate had wanted ready to ride in to Headquarters after the ceremony. White recalls that later that day he phoned Dulles and said he had to repossess the specially-equipped Agency car that the ex-Director had been given. The well-traveled Cadillac picked up McCone the next morning and broke down on the way to Washington. Dulles was given an old Chrysler that he liked, while McCone had to wait several more days for his Cadillac. White oral history interview by Vero Beach, FL, 7 January 1998 (hereafter White/ OH), 37–38; White diary notes for 29 November 1961. John Ranelagh (*The Agency*, 415) tells the automobile story in a way that makes McCone seem even more imperious:

On his last day as DCI, Allen Dulles left the agency in the director's limousine, a specially constructed car with sophisticated communications equipment built in. McCone, who had come out to see Dulles off, turned around as the car pulled away and told his aides that he wanted a similar car to be ready for him the following morning. The car was provided after the Agency's technical staff worked all night converting one for him.

This rendering, sourced to unidentified CIA employees, jumbles the sequence of events and does not indicate that McCone had been asking about his official vehicle for several weeks. White diary notes for 9 October 1961. ~~XXXX~~

²¹ White House press release, "Remarks of the President at the Swearing-In Ceremonies of John McCone," 29 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 8, folder 7; UPI wire report, 29 November 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 2; "Chronology of DCI Office Space," 6 May 1971, HS Files, HS/HC-429, Job 84T00286R, box 3, folder 1. The day before, McCone attended the ceremony at Langley at which President Kennedy awarded Dulles the National Security Medal. (U)

The sudden death of McCone's wife of 33 years scarcely a week after he was sworn in left the bereaved DCI uncertain whether he would remain on the job, but after a short time he decided to stay. Rosemary Cooper McCone, 53, died on 6 December of an apparent heart attack while en route to a hospital in Washington. An illness had prevented her from coming to the capital to attend her husband's swearing-in ceremony, but she had recovered sufficiently to move soon after. She was described as "vivacious, attractive...[with] pretty features and the kind of chic that comes from wearing Sophie originals." First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy and many senior administration officials attended her funeral. *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* articles on 7 and 8 December 1961, and *Washington Evening Star*, 29 September 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

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tion downtown and sought to restore CIA's reputation through a variety of approaches: by managing the Agency firmly, [redacted]

[redacted] Further complicating McCone's task was the fact that he had to accomplish all those objectives with CIA seemingly in the psychological doldrums. He recalled that when he became DCI, he thought the Agency "was in a state of shock...a great many people were very discouraged...the spirit of the organization was at an all-time low"—mainly because "a great many people [in the US government] who should have shared in the responsibility for the [Bay of Pigs] failure ducked it and left the responsibility on the shoulders of CIA."²² ~~XX~~

Life with "Jolly John" (U)

It was by no means clear at the outset that McCone's professional experience and leadership style would inspire the Agency.²³ Many CIA careerists who had made their mark in the "golden age" of the 1950s worried about McCone's unfamiliarity with intelligence issues. They regarded him as "an engineer...a man who knew how to meet a payroll...[but] would just never learn what was going on" inside the Agency, according to McCone's executive assistant, Walter Elder. They thought the administration put him at CIA mainly "to stabilize and refloat the vessel after its near-disastrous foundering on the shoals of the Bay of Pigs," photoanalyst Dino Brugioni recalls. "Few felt that he would remain for an extended period." Devoted to the avuncular Dulles and the pipe-and-tweeds ambience he fostered, Agency veterans—especially those in the Clandestine Services—were jarred by the sudden transition to the button-down, bottom-line McCone and the corporate-world methods he imported from day one and maintained through his directorship. Former senior DDP officer David Atlee Phillips remembered that "[i]n his first appearance at Langley,

[McCone] left an impression of austerity, remoteness, and implacability." Some senior analysts involved with nuclear energy estimates thought McCone was "highly prejudiced," McGeorge Bundy wrote at the time. The new DCI was soon tagged with the ironic monicker "Jolly John," and one military-minded wag drew up a "table of organization" showing McCone as a four-star general supported by [redacted] buck privates. ~~XX~~

Today McCone would be called a "Type A" executive—dynamic, resolute, and unsentimental, with exceptionally high standards and a near-total dedication to mission, engendering respect and obedience but little affection. He had enormous energy and a tremendous capacity for work. Officers who knew him used words like "tough," "hard-driving," "sharp," "impatient," "forceful," "brilliant," and "penetrating" to describe him. Anyone meeting him for the first time, especially if caught in his "steely blue" stare, knew immediately that he was accustomed to getting things done his way.²⁴ Not physically imposing—about five feet, nine inches tall, with a compact build, white hair, and wire-rimmed spectacles—McCone led by power of personality and intellect, amplified by impeccable dress and crisp voice and mannerisms. In his official portrait at Headquarters, McCone grips one chair arm tightly and leans forward slightly, a taut package of energy with a somewhat impatient expression that challenges the viewer to get to the point so he can move on to other business. McCone had a recruiting brochure produced with a photograph of himself springing from a limousine on his way to a crisis meeting at the White House—not out of vanity, but to project an image of an activist CIA close to the levers of power. "[E]verthing he did was action-oriented," according to E. Henry ("Hank") Knoche, at the time the DDCI's executive assistant; "he always thought in terms of what action should be taken...and he wanted such fast action..." McCone did not believe in management systems; "if you'd...talked to

²² Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. McCone used similar language in a memorandum he wrote after attending a White House meeting a week before his swearing-in: "...the Agency and indeed the Administration appeared to be in a condition of 'shock' as a result of the happenings in Cuba..." Memorandum for the record, 22 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 685. ~~XX~~

²³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Walter Elder oral history interview by [redacted] McLean, VA, 17 September 1987 (hereafter Elder [redacted] OH), 10-11; Marshall S. Carter and E. Henry Knoche oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Colorado Springs, CO, 29 November 1988 (hereafter Carter-Knoche OH), 5-6, 15, 26, 51; Dino Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 64; Ranelagh, 415; Bundy memorandum to President Kennedy, "Washington News," 28 September 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 188; Walter Elder, "Support for John A. McCone," unpublished manuscript, 21, HS Files, Job 87-01032R, box 1, folder 37; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 186; Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 192; Kirkpatrick, 233-35; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 118, 124; and Richard Helms with William Hood, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 195-96. ~~XX~~

²⁴ The effect of McCone's gaze was memorable to many on whom it fell. DDCI Marshall Carter recalled that McCone's eyes could turn into "blue steel balls" that "emitted a little lightning." Sherman Kent, CIA's longtime senior estimator, maintained that McCone's eyes were brown, not blue, but that they had the effect of being icy blue. Walter Elder thought they were dark blue but noted that whatever their color, they were transfixing. Carter-Knoche OH, 26; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, 1 July 1987 (not transcribed; tape recording on file in the History Staff; hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH1). For the record: McCone's eyes were brown. (U)

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him about zero-based budgeting or management by objective, he'd give you ten seconds to get the hell out of there." He delegated substantial responsibility to his deputies and expected them to measure up to his mark; demanded quick and full briefings on any matter that seized his attention; and had his activities thoroughly documented with memoranda and transcripts. His confident bearing, quick grasp of complex material, firmness in making decisions, and strict adherence to schedules and lines of authority left no doubt as to who was in charge. McCone did not assume these character traits and leadership techniques merely as executive suite symbolism to mark the transfer of power from Dulles. "His management style [at CIA]," Elder has said, "was the same management style he had in business and as Undersecretary of the Air Force and Chairman of the AEC: results."²⁵ ~~XX~~

On a "typical" day McCone followed a brisk, even frenetic, routine that filled his hours from early morning until mid- to late evening. He rose early and began his official business right away, dictating, telephoning, listening to briefers, and often meeting with visitors over breakfast. An Agency chauffeur picked him up at his home on Whitehaven Street in northwest Washington and brought him to Headquarters soon after 0800.

(On days when he had morning appointments downtown, he worked out of the DCI suite in the South [or Administration] Building at the E Street complex.) His limousine had a secure telephone and a glass partition so he could work while in traffic. After arriving at his office and tending to immediate busi-



McCone in his recruiting poster pose (U)

ness, reading urgent messages, and establishing his schedule for the day, McCone held a staff meeting at 0900. He regarded this daily conference with his principal lieutenants as a vital forum of communication. DDP Richard Helms remarked at the time that the DCI "is an 'organization man' who desires the Agency to be aware of his views and...wishes to be personally aware of all Agency activities of major importance." At first McCone wanted the meetings to be small and short, so he included only the DDCI, the executive director, and the DCI's or DDCI's executive assistant. One of the latter two briefed the others on overnight developments and the content of the current publications. McCone then issued a few orders, and the meeting ended. It was informal, unstructured, and often held as soon as the attendees could be assembled. No minutes were kept. Later on, McCone decided he needed a more comprehensive and ordered presentation of information to ensure that CIA officers "could speak to important issues with a single Agency voice." He expanded the list of attendees to include his main staff officers—the legislative and general counsels, the inspector general (IG), the chief of Public Affairs and sometimes the comptroller—the deputy directors, and the head of the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), who opened the meeting with a briefing

on overnight events. Each participant took his turn as necessary, after which the DCI ticked off a succinct list of issues he wanted addressed, papers he wanted written, and people he wanted contacted. The meeting almost always was over by 0930.²⁶ ~~XX~~

²⁵ DDCI Carter illustrated McCone's capacity for quick study by recounting when the DCI became "the expert on open heart surgery." His sister had been diagnosed with a serious cardiac ailment, but there was some doubt about whether to subject her to the invasive operation usually performed in such cases. McCone had the Agency's medical staff brief him on her condition and supply him with books on cardiology. After this crash self-tutoring, McCone advised his sister to go ahead with the surgery. Carter-Knoche OH, 36. (U)

Regarding McCone's record-keeping, "Hank" Knoche did not believe McCone wrote "CYA memos" because "he was a strong enough fellow, he could withstand any kind of criticism he got." Carter-Knoche OH, 26. Richard Bissell, the DDP when McCone took over, told his staff that the DCI was "very anti-paper, especially internal administrative paper concerning matters that could be handled by telephone," but that he wanted documentation kept on all CIA contacts with outsiders, especially foreign nationals. DDP staff meeting minutes for 15 January 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40. ~~XX~~

²⁶ McCone calendars, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 8, folder 10 (hereafter McCone calendars); Elder, "Support for McCone," 9, 17; DDP staff meeting minutes for 12 April 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; Carter-Knoche OH, 48-49; Russell Jack Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 150; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Rosslyn, VA, 14 April 1989 (hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH2), 13, 15; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 204. ~~XX~~

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The rest of McCone's "day" would be fully occupied with meetings, conferences, nearly always a working luncheon, telephone calls, dictation, and frequent trips to the White House, the Departments of State and Defense, and the Capitol. He regularly attended NSC meetings and rarely missed chairing a USIB discussion. He was accustomed to moving quickly and expected everyone around him to do the same. He would dictate at his residence first thing in the morning and had the tape immediately sent to his office so a transcript would be on his desk when he arrived. He assumed command of every vehicle he rode in and often ordered the Executive Dining Room to prepare meals for distinguished guests with minimal notice. He placed heavy demands on the Watch Office, the Cable Secretariat, and the Executive Registry to feed his 'round-the-clock appetite for information. In the evenings and on weekends, McCone mixed pleasure and business. He and his second wife enjoyed hobnobbing with policymakers, congressmen, corporate executives, foreign officials, and journalists at receptions, dinners, and cultural events around town, and they regularly hosted official associates, well-connected friends, and liaison dignitaries at home. He played golf at the elite Burning Tree Country Club in Maryland, more for the social contact than out of fondness for the game. When he thought a breaking event required immediate high-level attention, he did not hesitate to summon his deputies to Headquarters, the South Building, or his residence at any hour of any day.²⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone's frequent travels provided no respite. During his directorship he took over 130 trips and was away from Headquarters more than 20 percent of the time. He made full use of the Agency's aviation capabilities—especially the [redacted] a proprietary) on his order and plushly outfitted to his specifications—or took commercial or military flights. He considered the US Air Force at his disposal and requested Jetstars, helicopters, and transports whenever he felt the need. As a wealthy businessman, McCone was used to traveling in style, and he expected his staff to arrange the same VIP treatment of first-class airline seats, four-star restaurants, five-diamond hotels, and door-to-door limousine service. He was "a difficult guest," one European station officer remembered. "He demanded the best room in the best

hotel.... He would insist on playing golf at a certain time.... His wife would want handworked leather bags picked up for her and shipped home." McCone had Headquarters send a briefing cable for him to read first thing in the morning, and then he embarked on a packed itinerary of meetings and working social functions with minimal down time. After he returned to Washington, it was not unusual for him to drop by the White House to brief the president or the national security adviser on the results of his trip. McCone reenergized himself from the rigors of his schedule with regular vacations to his residences in San Marino, California, and Cat Cay in the Bahamas, although on his West Coast trips he spent a substantial portion of his time on private business matters.²⁸ ~~XX~~

Anecdotes illustrating McCone's executive approach soon proliferated. He showed his impatience with war stories and other digressions at one of his first staff meetings, when J.C. King, head of the DDP's Western Hemisphere Division (WH), started recounting a complicated spy tale of the sort that intrigued Dulles. "Damn it, J.C., shut up!" McCone barked. Soon after he became director, the managers of the Agency's computer center invited him to visit their facility to get acquainted and boost morale. Dulles had often visited components that were having problems to give them a pep talk. McCone declined the invitation, commenting that he was DCI, not a shop foreman, and that if the computer center needed him to raise morale, there must be something wrong with its management. After word of that incident circulated through the corridors, few other offices asked him to drop by. A dismayed staffer looked up from a memorandum McCone had handed him requesting a vast amount of information and said, "I suppose you want it all tomorrow." Without pausing to blink, McCone replied, "Not tomorrow, today—if I wanted it tomorrow, I would ask for it tomorrow." The DCI had a security man summarily removed from his detail for leaving a door open at his house, and for intruding on a meeting with the [redacted] to say that Gen. Eisenhower was on the phone. McCone said he got annoyed at the officer because he did not want the [redacted] to know how close he was to the former president.²⁹ ~~XX~~

²⁷ Elder, "Support for McCone," 4, 8, 14–16, 20–21; McCone calendars. ~~XX~~

²⁸ McCone calendars; Elder, "Support for McCone," 2–4; David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 186. Of the 131 trips identified on McCone's calendars, 46 were to the West Coast, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle; 28 were to New York; 14 were to the Bahamas; 14 (not counting his honeymoon to France) were overseas; and the remainder were to places such as Boston, Gettysburg, the LBJ Ranch, SAC headquarters in Nebraska. ~~XX~~

²⁹ Grose, 538; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 64–65; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 193; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 16 October 1962. ~~XX~~

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Some of the most vivid recollections of McCone's demanding nature come from senior officers in the Directorate of Intelligence (DI)—an indication of the great importance he placed on making CIA analysis the best possible so it would have the maximum influence on policy-makers. McCone's "mind and persona were steely blue-eyed," recalled R. Jack Smith, head of OCI from 1962 to 1966. "[He] was exacting and direct to the point of brusqueness. He tolerated no shilly-shally or dawdling. When he ordered something[,] there was a steely-eyed glance that conveyed 'right now and do it right!'" Arthur Lundahl, the Agency's chief photointerpreter for many years, remembered that McCone "left no room for doubt and no room for error. It made no difference if you had been all-American on his list 26 weeks in a row, if you faltered in the next instance, you're out. You had to do it every single day, or you didn't get to play...you never let down with John McCone. It was a matter of excellence every time you showed up." Ray Cline, McCone's second DDI, observed that "[h]is sharp, penetrating queries kept everyone in CIA on his toes, and he had little patience with imprecision, inefficiency, or slowness in producing results."³⁰ (U)

Richard Helms has noted that, despite McCone's cut-to-the-chase style, the DCI more than once met his match with CIA's daunting security practices. Those home-grown arcana may have seemed the antithesis of efficiency to McCone, but he soon understood the operational need for them. On his European orientation trip, he complained that Allen Dulles required that he stay in a private home and not at the local luxury hotel he was used to.

I've been in and out of that hotel for ten years. I've spent the last five days racing around the Continent, being entertained and examined by [redacted]

[redacted] I've met two prime ministers, half the foreign ministers in Western Europe, and a score of politicians, émigrés and otherwise. As far as I can see, there can't be many people on the Continent who don't know I'm here. Who is Mr. Dulles hiding me from by insisting that I impose myself on you and your wife?

The prospective host, who had known Dulles since their OSS days, explained, "It may be a security reflex.... [Dulles] has his own habits of operating, and rather likes showing the flag...with one or two exceptions, [he] expects the rest of us to keep cover." The DCI-designate relented.³¹ (U)

Once in office, however, McCone sometimes made his own security rules. [redacted]

McCone's résumé as a wealthy businessman, dedicated Republican, and devout Catholic, combined with his driving style and aloof personality, raised concerns inside and outside the Agency that he would be intellectually rigid and try to impose his views on his subordinates, particularly the analysts. While the DCI had deep convictions about a few large things—notably the evils of communism and the threat it posed to Western values—Cline remembered that McCone "always did his homework, was anxious to learn, and, although strong-minded, [was] willing to adjust his opinions in the light of evidence and reasoned judgments." Roger Hilsman, head of intelligence at the Department of State, agreed: "McCone was tough and a hard-liner...but it was a sensible and reasonable toughness by and large, and his intelligence judgments and policy predilections were toward a selective, discriminating application of toughness, tailored to the particular situation." Nor did McCone hold personal grudges with deputies with whom he disagreed over management or intelligence issues. He had trouble respecting some subordinates whom he believed had let him down—prominent examples are DDCI Marshall Carter and DDS "Red" White—but once he vented his formidable

³⁰ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 151–52; Arthur Lundahl and Dino Brugioni oral history interview by [redacted] Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 192. (U)

³¹ Helms, 192. (U)

³² Author's conversation with [redacted] 30 October 2001. ~~X~~

[redacted] Bethesda, MD, 14 December 1983, 42;

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temper after a miscue, or when the heat of argument over a judgment or decision subsided, he put the dispute aside. McCone once interrupted a briefing R. Jack Smith was giving to comment that the military had reached the opposite conclusion from CIA's. After Smith replied that the information was ambiguous and could be judged either way, McCone lashed out: "You know damned well that isn't so. Your people are just sitting on their behinds and not doing their job!" Smith retorted reflexively: "I don't agree with you for an instant, Mr. McCone, and I will be glad to discuss this with you on some other occasion!" The DCI glowered at him and went on with the meeting, but the next morning greeted Smith kindly and asked, "Well, Jack, how is your world today?" When a senior Agency officer warned his own wife that he might be transferred or dismissed after a serious confrontation with McCone, she told him not to worry; the DCI had just sent her a gift—a *quart* of expensive French perfume.³³ (U)

A few Agency associates of McCone claim to have discerned a softer aspect of their new boss. Cline observed:

McCone was deadly serious most of the time, but he recounted his adventures at the White House level in detail with great skill, which frequently occasioned a little humor. He enjoyed the laughs if they did not get in the way of dispatching the day's business. As I got to know him better, I learned that he had a warm and sentimental side beneath the stern Scot's exterior, although it surfaced only from time to time and usually when we were far away from the daily grind.

David Atlee Phillips found McCone to be "an entertaining and stimulating luncheon companion who thoroughly recognized the value of a dry martini and a wry anecdote." Richard Helms thought the DCI was "fundamentally decent" and enjoyed working with him "because you usually

knew where you stood." McCone "was not difficult to work for"; he had "high...but not unreal standards"; he was "exacting" but "not unreasonable."³⁴ ~~XX~~

Yet even though a sizable number of CIA officers thought Dulles's time had passed, that he was disorganized, feeble, and too interested in covert action, hardly any of them have gone on record as reacting favorably to McCone as a person. The vast majority of recollections about McCone emphasize his cooler qualities, such as his exacting insistence on quality, productivity, and efficiency, that stand out so starkly from his predecessor's relaxed paternalism. "Maybe Allen [Dulles] was a bit of a romantic. But it was fun working for him," reminisced one Agency veteran—"fun" not being a word associated with McCone. Lyman Kirkpatrick observed that "one doesn't get close to John McCone. He's not the type." Marshall Carter remembered that "I never did feel...at all that he knew how to deal with people as people.... I never had the feeling...that he had any direct rapport with any of the senior officers, that he managed by fiat.... He operated more through the vice president concept." As "Hank" Knoche succinctly put it: "I felt every moment that I was going to be fired the next."³⁵ ~~XX~~

Despite all the apprehension McCone produced, morale at CIA during his directorship rebounded to levels not experienced since the mid-1950s. He was so well connected to the Kennedy administration and had such success at making Agency operations and analysis an integral part of US national security policy that CIA officers believed they again were doing vitally important work that was appreciated and had influence downtown. "The Agency...felt galvanized... They had a sense of purpose," Elder recalled. Knowing that, most officers were willing to put up with the criticism, strained relations, and organizational changes they endured under McCone, and in the end he earned their respect, if not their affection.³⁶ (U)

³³ Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 193; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 47; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 152; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; Carter-Knoche OH, 26. (U)

³⁴ Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 194; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; author's conversation with Richard Helms, 29 January 1998; Richard Helms oral history interview by Mary McAuliffe, Washington, DC, 19 June 1989 (hereafter Helms/McAuliffe OH), 11. ~~XX~~

³⁵ Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *Sub Rosa: The OSS and American Espionage*, rev. ed., 263; Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Middleburg, VA, 22 June 1989 (hereafter Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH), 2; Marshall S. Carter oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Colorado Springs, CO, 28 and 30 November 1988 (hereafter Carter/McAuliffe OH), 10–11; Carter-Knoche OH, 26. ~~XX~~

³⁶ Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 39. In the late 1970s, David Atlee Phillips polled 11 senior Agency executives about their attitudes toward the personalities of five DCIs with whom they had worked closely—Dulles, McCone, Raborn, Helms, and Colby. When asked, "If I were to be shipwrecked on a desert island, a pleasant one with abundant food, good climate, a supply of scotch and every hope a ship would pass by, I would choose to be with ____," six voted for Dulles, four for Helms, and one for McCone. When asked, "If I were to be shipwrecked on a terrible desert island, with little food and no amenities, with scant hope for survival, and I wanted to escape badly, I would choose to be with ____," they gave McCone and Helms four votes each and Colby three; Dulles got none. Presumably the officers thought that while Dulles would be the most enjoyable companion for sharing pleasure with, McCone would be better able to get a boat built and get the stranded travelers on their way—and away from each other—quicker. *The Night Watch*, 279–80. (U)

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Finessing the Bay of Pigs Postmortem (U)

Almost immediately, McCone had to deal with the recriminations emanating from the episode that had prompted his appointment—the Bay of Pigs. He was first confronted with the dilemma just as he was leaving for California to clear up personal business over the Thanksgiving weekend before assuming the directorship. Lyman Kirkpatrick, at the time the IG, delivered copy number one of his office's just-completed critique of the Agency's role in the operation to the DCI-designate at National Airport, instead of to Allen Dulles, who had requested the report. Kirkpatrick had concluded that the Bay of Pigs task force had bungled badly from the outset, putting into motion an operation that was misconceived, mismanaged, and bound to fail. Wary that Dulles might bury these findings, he chose to bypass the outgoing DCI and deliver his final report to McCone instead. Kirkpatrick's choice of recipients, as well as his findings, set off an uproar within the Agency, and gossip quickly spread that he was just trying to curry favor with the incoming director. The IG's misstep presented McCone with his first opportunity to handle a politically sensitive internal controversy, and many senior officers in the clandestine services who lamented Dulles's departure watched how the inexperienced outsider they now called "Mr. Director" would respond.³⁷ (U)

Kirkpatrick's breach of protocol angered McCone, who thought it was a miscalculated attempt to settle old scores.³⁸ He realized how disruptive and divisive the IG report would be inside CIA if its contents got outside the closed circle of senior officers responsible for the operation, and he did not want to start his directorship with a major row among his deputies. During the next several weeks, he worked to mitigate the dispute through a calculated mix of tactics: smoothing over Kirkpatrick's gaffe, allowing the DDP a chance to respond, suppressing circulation of the report, avoiding

going on record as siding with either conclusion, and shuffling personnel in ways that placated advocates of the two camps. After he arrived in California, McCone called Kirkpatrick, learned that the IG had not yet given Dulles or Bissell their copies, and directed him to do so immediately. Next, he authorized Bissell to prepare a response that he had permanently attached to the IG's report. He ordered that all copies of the report and several attachments written by the DDCI, DDP, and Dulles be accounted for, had all but three (those for Dulles, Kirkpatrick, and PFIAB) impounded in his office, kept the original in his safe, and had several others destroyed. He expressed his own Solomonic view about culpability for the Bay of Pigs in a letter to PFIAB in which he described both Kirkpatrick's analysis and the DDP rebuttal as "extreme" and concluded that all US government agencies involved in the operation shared responsibility for its failure. Lastly, McCone's replacement of Bissell with operations chief Helms and Kirkpatrick's elevation to the new position of executive director helped mollify defenders and critics of the IG and the DDP.³⁹ ~~(S)~~

McCone was one of the relatively few officials who saw all three Bay of Pigs postmortems—by a presidential board of inquiry chaired by retired Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor, PFIAB, and the IG. He was not satisfied with the so-called Taylor Report, submitted in June 1961 by Taylor; Robert Kennedy; Allen Dulles; and the Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Arleigh Burke. Taylor's panel concluded that although the Cuban brigade members fought bravely, there were too few of them to hold out against Castro's troops, even if they had destroyed Castro's air force and won control of the air. Dulles and Burke dissented, contending that had the brigade received air cover and ammunition, it could have succeeded—an outcome which both Taylor and Kennedy thought unlikely, given Castro's vastly larger forces. McCone thought Taylor's inquiry "wasn't...overly

³⁷ Bissell, 193; Grose, 535; Peter Kornbluh, ed., *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, 237, 238, 240, 248; Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 3, 128, 139–40; Michael Warner, "The CIA's Internal Probe of the Bay of Pigs Affair," *Studies* 42, no. 5 (Winter 1998–99): 93–102. Kirkpatrick later defended his action on the grounds that he was determined to prevent an operational and administrative failure of such magnitude from being whitewashed, and that McCone had asked to see the report, but he conceded that he "probably handled [the episode] the wrong way." Lyman B. Kirkpatrick Jr. oral history interview by [redacted] Providence, RI, 26 April 1967 (hereafter Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH), 5–6. (U)

³⁸ Sources for this discussion are: Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 3, 137–38; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General...January 20, 1962..." and J.S. Earman (DCI executive assistant) memorandum to Bissell and Kirkpatrick, 23 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. McCone...December 18, 1961," Lyman Kirkpatrick Collection, section 1, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD; and *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, 243, 252–57. ~~(S)~~

³⁹ After Bissell left CIA, he carried on his dispute with Kirkpatrick. In March 1962, Bissell sent a memorandum to McCone accusing Kirkpatrick of "hypercritical" and "objectionable" meddling in operational management and assuming "an air of command...which is not in keeping with his position and his authority." Bissell suggested that the DCI clearly establish the IG's authority along the lines of the US Army's counterpart. Bissell memorandum to McCone, "Definition of Functions of the Inspector General," 5 March 1962, and David R. McLean (Acting IG) memorandum to McCone, "Mr. Bissell's Comments on the Inspector General's Role," 28 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 12. During 1964–65 at McCone's request, Bissell worked as a consultant evaluating NSA's efforts against encrypted Soviet communications. James Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 359. ~~(S)~~

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penetrating.... It wasn't a very good report...they didn't get to the bottom of it."⁴⁰ (U)

Nearly two years later, Kirkpatrick asked McCone if he thought the IG's report was a "knife job." The DCI replied that he thought it was "tough" and "perhaps in certain instances bore unnecessarily hard on the Agency." As he was preparing to leave Langley, however, McCone remarked that CIA had to assume more responsibility for the operation's failure because besides the JCS, it was the only national security entity unaffected by the transfer of office from Eisenhower to Kennedy and should have served as a check on "this new and untried administration."⁴¹ ~~(S)~~

McCone added some thoughts about the failed operation in letters to Bissell more than 20 years later:

Some day soon we will meet again and I would like to get your version of the discussion you and [DDCI Charles P.] Cabell had with Dean Rusk when you were trying to persuade the President to withdraw the "stand down" of the air cover you had arranged for the landing of the Brigade. It was this fatal error that caused the failure....

...entering CIA as its Director shortly after the Bay of Pigs failure, I heard many explanations and analyses of the invasion effort and the reasons that things went wrong. I have lodged in my mind two and only two serious errors by individuals. First, it seemed to me Allen Dulles made a serious mistake in judgment by darting off to Puerto Rico or elsewhere to make a speech on the very eve of the most serious undertaking of his career as Director of CIA. In my opinion, Allen should have known that a young, inexperienced administration quite possibly would be influenced to make errors in judgment and this, of course, is just what happened. I do not criticize General Cabell or you for not accepting Secretary Rusk's offer that you appeal directly to the President after you learned of the President's critical decision of standing down the B-26s...if Allen had been in Washington and available, he might well have persuasively outlined the tragic results of the President's decision and quite pos-

sibly gone to the point of turning around the brigade before the ill-fated landing was attempted.

The second responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of President Kennedy, who apparently was persuaded by Adlai Stevenson and possibly others to "stand down" the B-26 air support.... Standing down the air strike was, in my opinion, a reckless decision by the President and one that Allen Dulles, had he been on the scene, would not have stood for.⁴² (U)

Mulling Over Internal Reorganization (U)

Having directed or served in several different administrative structures in the private and public sectors, McCone had definite ideas about how the organization and management of CIA could be improved. Whatever intentions he may have had initially to shake up the Agency, however, were circumscribed by the White House. After President Kennedy's initial anger at CIA over the Bay of Pigs waned, he left it alone for the most part, entrusting his brother and McCone to keep it on track. "There was no pettiness in the [president's] reaction," Richard Bissell remembered. "Privately he spoke about cutting the agency down to size, but in the end really nothing was done." Robert Kennedy wanted the Agency's clandestine capability refined, not diminished. In one of their first meetings after McCone became DCI, the attorney general showed that he would be monitoring CIA operations closely. He told McCone he was dissatisfied with the Agency's labor and psychological warfare projects, resented CIA's resistance to Gen. Edward Lansdale's heading an interagency group on counterinsurgency, thought Agency activities in Latin America needed review, and singled out Bissell and J.C. King for criticism. With this overall guidance from downtown—make CIA work better and keep it out of trouble—McCone embarked on his own agenda of administrative and programmatic changes affecting the approximately [REDACTED]

After McCone was appointed, he requested and received from Kirkpatrick an "EYES ONLY" memorandum containing several pages of blunt thumbnail evaluations of the Agency's major components. Kirkpatrick generally rated the DI higher than the DDP and the DS, but hardly any office

⁴⁰ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. For the text of the Taylor Report, see *Operation Zapata: The "Ultrasensitive" Report and Testimony of the Board of Inquiry on the Bay of Pigs*. (U)

⁴¹ Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 4 September 1963; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. ~~(S)~~

⁴² Bissell, 194, 196. (U)

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or division escaped his trenchant criticism. This appraisal may have provided a baseline from which McCone developed some of the bureaucratic scenarios that buzzed in his mind. Just after his appointment, McCone told Lawrence White confidentially that he was thinking of running CIA somewhat as he had the AEC, where he relied on subordinate commissioners to handle substantive matters and delegated daily administration to a "general manager and chief executive officer." On a trip from California soon after becoming DCI, he drew a completely new organizational chart on the back of a manila envelope. One of the scheme's noteworthy features was the creation of a position of "general manager" for the Agency. On another occasion, McCone considered splitting the DDP into human and technical activities components and contracting out much of the Agency's historical and economics work.⁴⁴ ~~(S)~~

To formalize the process of administrative change, McCone—in one of his first official actions—established a Working Group on Organization and Activities to study the structure and operation of CIA and USIB and its numerous committees.⁴⁵ McCone relieved Kirkpatrick of his duties as IG and made him chairman of the Working Group, which soon assumed his name. Gen. Courtland Schuyler, from the staff of New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and J. Patrick Coyne, PFIAB's executive secretary, were the other members. McCone realized that despite the blunder with the presentation of the Bay of Pigs report, Kirkpatrick was the best officer for the job; he already had conducted two detailed organization studies of the Agency, and in eight years as IG had inspected all its components. The DCI gave Kirkpatrick the assignment, with this admonition:

I don't want you to write any long reports. In this organization it seems that every time I ask for something I get a 42-page report with 12 annexes. When

you have something you want to talk to me about, I want you to come see me, and when I have some thoughts I want to explore, I will call for you.

In characteristic fashion, McCone closed the interview by telling Kirkpatrick, "Get started on this immediately. Monday will be soon enough." It was then Friday.⁴⁶ ~~(S)~~

After a few weeks at Langley, McCone explored some of his early thoughts about the Agency's structure and management and indicated some problems he had identified. Most broadly, he thought that competition between bureaucracies—which he distinguished from energetic efforts to complement each other's activity—was "very corrosive," especially at the lower levels, and he wanted to have lines of authority, responsibility, and function clearly defined from the top down. He was "a bit disappointed" with the work of ONE, and he suggested that its members "should be more ivory towerish" and leave day-to-day and short-term analysis to OCI. Although he had been "quite favorably impressed" with the DI "except for the quality of some personnel" (who went unnamed), McCone wondered how much analysis could be done on contract by organizations like the RAND Corporation. Lastly, the DCI thought the Clandestine Services should be divided into two major components: one responsible for espionage, counterintelligence, and covert action, and the other involved with scientific and technical collection. He was inclined to establish a separate paramilitary element in the DDP, "highly professional under a top officer and...equipped at all times" for short-notice missions. McCone did not like the idea of the Pentagon's counterinsurgency official, Edward Lansdale, running these activities—"it is our business," he insisted—but neither was he anxious to take them over right away because he thought Lansdale's present mission—subverting Castro with Opera-

⁴³ Ernest Volkman and Blaine Baggett, *Secret Intelligence*, 130, citing interview with Bissell; James W. Hilty, *Robert Kennedy, Brother Protector*, 417–31; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record: Discussion with Attorney General...November 29, 1961," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; "Agency Positions, Ceiling and Total On Duty for the Period 1952 through 1970," "Ceiling and T/O Changes, 30 June 1962–31 December 1963," and "Ceiling and T/O Changes, 1963–71," Human Resources Management (HRM) Files, Job 82-00469R, box 2, folders 1 and 2; "Full-Time Permanent Personnel, 1950–1977," ER Files, Job 79M00467A, box 2, folder 24; "CIA Intelligence Activity Estimates, 1962 through 1969," 21 March 1964, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 4; "Total CIA Obligations, 1947–1977," Intelligence Community Staff (ICS) Files, Job 79M01476A, box 1, folder 12. ~~(S)~~

⁴⁴ Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Evaluation of Components of the Agency," 13 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Organization of CIA," 7 November 1961, *ibid.*, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 325; White diary notes for 26 October 1961; McCone's jottings on envelope in ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 30 December 1961. ~~(S)~~

⁴⁵ Eisenhower established USIB in 1958 to set intelligence objectives, requirements, and priorities; review and report to the NSC on the overall national intelligence effort; develop and assess security standards and practices; formulate liaison arrangements; and coordinate strategic estimates. Its operating authority came in National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) 1 as modified in September 1958. ~~(S)~~ 177 ~~(S)~~

⁴⁶ Headquarters Notice HN 1-7, 5 December 1961, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 1 December 1961; Kirkpatrick, 236–37. ~~(S)~~

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tion MONGOOSE (see Chapter 4)—was “impossible” to accomplish.⁴⁷ ~~(S)~~

Winning Confirmation (U)

Before he could do much more, McCone had to finish the statutory process of becoming DCI. President Kennedy had appointed him after Congress adjourned, and he had served without Senate confirmation for two months before that chamber reconvened in January 1962 and took up his nomination.⁴⁸ While at the AEC, McCone had established good relations with the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and some prominent congressional conservatives, and his prospects for working well with the four committees charged with CIA oversight⁴⁹ seemed good. McCone faced more opposition from the Senate than any previous DCI nominee, however—an indication that Congress intended to watch CIA more closely after the Bay of Pigs. During the recess period, some senators publicly voiced reservations about McCone, mainly about his strong anticommunism and its potential effect on his objectivity. Eugene McCarthy (D-MN), one of his most outspoken critics, went further and questioned whether he was qualified for the job (without specifying what the appropriate qualifications were). McCone left a private discussion with McCarthy in early January believing that the senator “carries a deep prejudice against CIA...and against me, personally.” Opponents of McCone’s nomination also expressed concerns about his alleged war profiteering and potential conflicts of interest between his private wealth and public responsibilities.⁵⁰ (U)

Muckraking journalist Drew Pearson led the press attack on McCone. In a salvo of radio broadcasts and syndicated columns during January, Pearson assailed him for assorted ethical transgressions. As manager of Calship during World

War II, McCone “made more money out of Uncle Sam on war contracts than perhaps any other man now working for the [US] Government.” As undersecretary of the Air Force, McCone got his “close associate” Henry Kaiser “off the hook” by “help[ing] swing one of the juiciest airplane contracts in history” to Kaiser’s aviation company. As chairman of the AEC, McCone retained large stock holdings in companies doing business with the Commission. Soon after McCone became chairman, the contract for operating the first American atomic-powered merchant vessel (the *Savannah*) was awarded “through a mysterious set of circumstances” to a shipping line that was initially ranked next-to-last in qualification but had a partnership with McCone’s Joshua Hendy firm. As prospective DCI, McCone declined to sell his large holdings of stock in American oil companies “whose profits and future are materially influenced” by CIA activities in the Middle East. Most notably, McCone still owned \$1 million of stock in Standard Oil of California, a member of the ARAMCO consortium that had significant influence in Middle Eastern affairs.⁵¹ (U)

After Pearson’s first three columns appeared, McCone told Robert Kennedy that Sen. McCarthy “very possibly” was the journalist’s source. The attorney general advised McCone to pay no attention to the articles, saying they would not affect his confirmation. To try to dispel opposition, McCone met with several senators and representatives, had the Agency’s general counsel prepare an opinion on financial conflicts of interest, and privately offered to withdraw his nomination if the controversy worsened. President Kennedy never indicated any concern about the upcoming hearings and had word sent to McCone that he retained the White House’s full confidence.⁵² ~~(S)~~

At his confirmation hearing, which began on 18 January, several senators pointedly questioned McCone about the

⁴⁷ McCone memorandum, “Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 195–96; Kirkpatrick, “Memorandum for the Record...Lunch with Mr. McCone...18 December [1961]...,” and “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Mr. McCone...December 20, 1961,” ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 325. ~~(S)~~

⁴⁸ On McCone’s confirmation generally, see Elder, “McCone as DCI (1973),” 30–51. Source material on this subject—including hearing transcripts and press clippings—is in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 5; DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106; OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folders 3–9; and McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

⁴⁹ The Senate and House Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. (U)

⁵⁰ AP wire report, 16 October 1961, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; “McCarthy Has Doubts on McCone for CIA,” *Washington Evening Star*, 16 October 1961, McCone clipping file, HIC; McCone, “Memorandum of Discussions with Senators Concerning Confirmation—9 January 1962,” McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1. See also “CIA’s Conflict-of-Interest Rules Were Kept a Secret from McCone,” *Life*, 10, no. 5 (5 February 1962): 2. (U)

⁵¹ Pearson’s “Washington Merry-Go-Round” columns in the *Washington Post* on 10, 11, 12, 17, 22, and 24 January 1962, transcripts of his broadcasts on Washington, DC radio stations on 6, 13, and 21 January 1962, and associate Jack Anderson’s “Washington Merry-Go-Round” column on 25 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 4. General Counsel Lawrence Houston opined that McCone’s stock holdings were permissible because the Agency did not have contracts, and was not then negotiating any, with the affected companies at the time within the meaning of the federal conflict-of-interest statute. Houston memorandum to Dulles, “Conflicts of Interest,” OGC 61-3783, and “Memorandum for the Record...Conflicts of Interest,” both dated 13 October 1961, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3; and “Memorandum on Conflicts of Interest,” 15 January 1962, DCI Files, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 106. ~~(S)~~

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Setting a New Course (I): Director of CIA (U)

subjects Pearson had raised. McCone largely reiterated the answers he gave during the 1946 congressional inquiry into war profiteering; claimed that the Kaiser aircraft company's competitor could not meet the production quota demanded under wartime exigencies, and that he had no financial stake in any Kaiser enterprise at the time; said the *Savannah* contract was decided upon by the US Maritime Administration, not the AEC, and was signed before he joined the Commission; and insisted that his stockholdings would not affect his work as DCI because he would not be a policymaker. McCone's opponents also publicized the intemperate letter he wrote to the scientists at Cal Tech who had endorsed Adlai Stevenson's test ban proposal in 1956. The letter seemed to indicate that McCone did not have the open and impartial mind required to run the Intelligence Community. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. McCarthy also suggested that McCone tried to quash a test ban while he was AEC chairman by leaking information about Soviet tests.⁵³ ~~XX~~

Taking up the committee's invitation to respond to McCarthy, McCone denied that any leaks came from the AEC while he was chairman. He further claimed that he had expressed "strong disagreement" with the Cal Tech professors to dispel any idea that their opinion represented the university's official position and denied that he had tried to have any of them dismissed. Under questioning from Democrats, McCone added that he did not object to scientists speaking out on political issues. (He later admitted, though, that "my dander was up... pretty bad" because the academics had gotten involved in a political argument.) He also said he supported the Kennedy administration's efforts to negotiate a verifiable test ban and that while he did not consider the DCI to be a policymaker, he would feel free to give his personal views on issues if asked.⁵⁴ (U)

Years later, McCone recalled that while some critics of his nomination thought his anticommunist views would skew the Agency's analysis, most senators who voted against him did so to signal displeasure with the Senate's purported lack



of control over CIA. J. William Fulbright (D-AR), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, declared that although he would vote to confirm McCone as secretary of defense, he would not support the DCI nomination to protest the Senate's passivity toward intelligence oversight. Fulbright resented that members of his committee had been excluded from the oversight processes of the Armed Services and Appropriations committees. McCone's hearings gave Fulbright a venue in which to skirmish with the Armed Services Committee chairman, Richard Russell (D-GA), a longtime Agency friend. Russell won the brief contest.⁵⁵ (U)

The Senate Armed Services Committee unanimously approved McCone's nomination on 21 January, and the full Senate confirmed him 10 days later in a 71-12 vote. Ten Democrats and two Republicans voted against his nomination. During the floor debate, Fulbright complained again

⁵² Memorandum of McCone meetings with Robert Kennedy on 11 January 1962 and with members of Congress on 9 and 16 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; memoranda of McCone meetings with President Kennedy on 7 and 17 January 1962, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 1; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 44. ~~XX~~

⁵³ *New York Times* on McCone's confirmation hearings, 19, 22, and 23 January 1962, and *Milwaukee Journal*, 28 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Houston, "Notes for the Director Regarding Confirmation," undated but c. mid-January 1962, OCA Files, Job 64B00346R, box 4, folder 3; Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, chap. 4. ~~XX~~

⁵⁴ McCone responded to McCarthy in a letter to Richard Russell on 19 January; the letter was soon made public. His recollection of the Cal Tech incident is in *Conversation with McCone*, 18. McCarthy further criticized CIA in two works, "The CIA Is Getting Out of Hand," *Saturday Evening Post*, 4-11 January 1964, 6, 10; and *The Hard Years: A Look at Contemporary America and American Institutions*. (U)

⁵⁵ McCone ~~XX~~ OH, 8-9; Elder ~~XX~~ OH, 57-58; L. Britt Snider, *Sharing Secrets with Lawmakers*, 1-4; Frank J. Smist Jr., *Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community, 1947-1994*, 5-9. (U)

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that he and his committee were not consulted about the appointment and that he was uncertain of McCone's foreign policy ideas. Other senators questioned McCone's qualifications in intelligence and apparent conflicts of interest. Afterward, the CIA's legislative affairs counsel, John Warner, advised the DCI that in subsequent dealings with Capitol Hill he should ignore those "smoke screen" issues and instead concentrate on courting the Agency's oversight subcommittees.⁵⁶ ~~XX~~

Changes to the Wiring Diagram (U)

Once confirmed, McCone implemented a series of administrative changes and brought in his own cadre of senior deputies. He thought his two most important management objectives were "assigning responsibilities and then insisting that subordinates measure up" and "controlling the money." Although he tried to "sell" rather than impose them, his changes—some purposefully, some unintentionally—upset the established order and stimulated some bitter infighting at CIA's highest echelons.⁵⁷ (U)

A number of McCone's actions, especially toward the Office of the DCI (ODCI), carried out recommendations of the Kirkpatrick Working Group, with which McCone met frequently during the 90 days it conducted its inquiries and prepared its report. In April 1962, McCone moved the key staff positions of general counsel, legislative counsel, and comptroller from under the DDS into the ODCI and created the new position of executive director. The executive director was to be the superadministrator of the Agency and the DCI's and DDCI's liaison with the directorates. McCone reconstituted the Executive Committee, with the DDCI as chairman and the four deputy directors, the DCI's executive assistant, the general counsel, and the comptroller as members. The Executive Committee met weekly to

review all important internal policy matters before McCone rendered a decision. With a businessman's eye for the bottom line, and harking back to his days at the AEC, McCone established a budget review panel, the Financial Policy and Budget Committee—comprising the comptroller and the assistant deputy directors—to examine the Agency's budget item by item before it went to him and the DDCI for approval. The revamped and expanded IG's staff now had separate audit and inspection elements, undertook a five-year overall inspection cycle, and scheduled regular visits to overseas stations.⁵⁸ ~~XX~~

Shuffling Senior Managers (U)

McCone took the selection of his principal executives very seriously because in his management scheme, the welfare of CIA depended on them. As "chairman of the board" of the Intelligence Community, he planned to delegate a large amount of responsibility to his lieutenants in their capacities as his chief officers for operations, administration, intelligence, and science and technology. Though a "hands-on" executive, he was not a micromanager and gave his component chiefs more latitude than they had under Dulles. He made his selections carefully after closely reading personnel dossiers and talking to Agency officers about candidates. In the end, McCone chose to fill the senior posts from within CIA. He wanted to draw on substantive expertise, maintain security, and raise morale, judging that an infusion of outsiders from business and other government agencies would perpetuate the malaise he was trying to dispel. In some cases, the prominence of the position was enhanced by the stature of the officer who filled it; in other cases, by the authority vested in it; and in others, by both.⁵⁹ ~~XX~~

Chief Operations Officer. At the time McCone was appointed, he and Bissell agreed that the DDP should leave sometime in December 1961. After his wife died early that

⁵⁶ *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, 1 February 1962, and *Washington Evening Star*, 22 and 30 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; John Warner (Legislative Counsel) memorandum to McCone, "Senate Debate on the Confirmation of John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," 24 February 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8. I.F. Stone delivered a polemic on the eve of the Senate vote, "(Triply) Biased Intelligence Guaranteed," *I.F. Stone's Weekly* 10, no. 4 (29 January 1962), McCone clipping file, HIC. *The New Republic* lauded McCone's senatorial opponents in an article rehashing their complaints: "They Said 'No to McCone,'" 12 February 1962, 15-18, *ibid.* At McCone's swearing-in ceremony weeks before the Senate vote, President Kennedy had shown how prescient the White House's vote counters were when he quipped to the new DCI, "I know of three liberals who are after you, but there are at least a dozen who are after me for appointing you." *Newsweek*, 11 December 1961, *ibid.* When pairings and communications from absent senators were included, the tally was 84-15 for confirmation. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 51. For a not-always-accurate look at what a knowledgeable journalistic observer thought was in store for CIA under McCone, see Hanson W. Baldwin, "CIA's Image Changes," *New York Times*, 28 January 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC. ~~XX~~

⁵⁷ Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 2-3. (U)

⁵⁸ McCone calendar entries for December 1961-April 1962; Kirkpatrick memorandum of McCone discussion with Kirkpatrick Working Group, 16 January 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 8; Kirkpatrick Working Group report, ER Files, Job 86B00269B, box 11, folder 64; DDP staff meeting minutes for 12 and 19 April 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; Kirkpatrick, 241-42; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 125; [Financial Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency,] Directorate of Administration Historical Series No. OF-1, 2 vols. (July 1976), vol. 2, 146-47, 153-55; Earman untitled memorandum, 3 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; [The Office of the Inspector General, January 1952-December 1971,] Office of the DCI Historical Series No. DCI-7 (October 1973), 106-12. ~~XX~~

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month, however, McCone asked Bissell to stay on because he was thinking about having the president withdraw his nomination. In early 1962, McCone decided that he wanted Bissell to run the science and technology directorate that he was planning to establish. He had spoken to Robert Kennedy, who had talked to the president, and they agreed that Bissell could remain. That McCone considered putting Bissell in charge of a whole new directorate seems odd because around that time he privately told a well-connected *New York Times* correspondent that although he respected Bissell's intellect, the DDP was "a professor, has no administrative ability, [and] is a dreamer...." McCone presumably judged that he needed Bissell's technical expertise, background in running overhead reconnaissance programs, and allies in the DDP to help him set up the science and technology component. Bissell considered the offer for a few days but declined, citing serious reservations about the new directorate's organization and responsibilities. McCone told him that "the Agency's loss will be great, but from your point of view, I think you're wise."⁶⁰

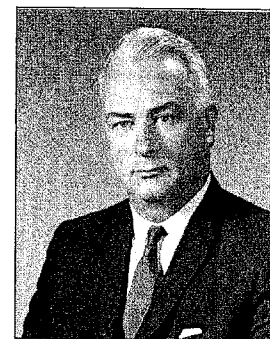


Richard Helms (U)

McCone's replacement of Bissell with Richard Helms may have been his most important selection in symbolism and substance, signaling a shift in emphasis from the Dulles-era Clandestine Services. Helms, deputy chief and chief of operations in the DDP since 1952 and regarded as the frontrunner to succeed Frank Wisner as head of the directorate in 1958, was the all-but-unanimous choice of everyone McCone asked. Helms was the embodiment of the "prudent professional." He was highly respected inside the Agency, provided continuity of leadership, and was an adept bureaucratic player.

When asked later what he regarded as Helms's principal strength, McCone answered, "coolness." Kirkpatrick said Helms "deserves great credit for holding the Clandestine Services together during a long period in which the two DDPs [Dulles and Wisner] were poor managers." Moreover, McCone believed that the Agency under Dulles had paid too much attention to covert action and not enough to collection; Helms had a background in espionage, was skeptical about paramilitary operations in peacetime, and had kept his distance from the Bay of Pigs. By all pertinent measures, he seemed McCone's best choice to head CIA's most potentially troublesome component. His selection quieted many of the rumblings in the Clandestine Services caused by Dulles's ouster and a newly implemented program of forced retirements.⁶¹

Chief Executive Officer. To oversee the reconfigured ODCI and the implementation of his other administrative changes, McCone appointed Lyman Kirkpatrick as executive director despite the controversy the Bay of Pigs report had generated. Kirkpatrick entered the intelligence world with the Office of Strategic Services and rose quickly in CIA until a disabling bout with polio sidetracked his career in operations in the early 1950s. He was made IG in 1953 and in nine years turned that then-innocuous position into an aggressive monitor of all Agency activities—including the hitherto protected area of covert operations. In the process he strained his relations with many CIA officers, particularly in the DDP. McCone believed Kirkpatrick knew more about the Agency than anyone else and did not mind that he was controversial: "if he didn't have his enemies he wouldn't be any damn good in his job." Robert Kennedy had directed McCone not to nominate Kirk-



Lyman Kirkpatrick (U)

⁵⁹ McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 195-96; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...[and] Discussion with DCI," 26 March 1962, Community Management Staff (CMS) Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140.

⁶⁰ Bissell letters to McCone, 7 and 16 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10; Kirkpatrick Working Group briefing notes for 2 February 1962, *ibid.*; Bissell, 203; Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story*, 311; Stanley Grogan (Office of Public Affairs) memorandum about McCone meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 117-18. McCone hosted a farewell dinner for Bissell at his residence in northwest Washington on 12 March (not at the Alibi Club as stated in Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 118).

⁶¹ McCone untitled memorandum to Kirkpatrick, 14 February 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 8; Headquarters Notice HN February 1962, *ibid.*, Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23; Elder memorandum about McCone meeting with Benjamin Welles (*New York Times*), 12 December 1969, *ibid.*, Job 80B01086A, box 11, folder 347; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 15-16; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...[and] Discussion with DCI...", 26 March 1962, CMS Files, 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. The forced retirement program is discussed in footnote 77.

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patrick as DDCI because of the row over the Bay of Pigs report, so the DCI instead selected him for the new post and gave him broad staff responsibilities and the status of acting director when both the DCI and DDCI were away. (McCone did not consider Kirkpatrick as third in the regular line of authority, however; "no one stood between me and my deputies," Elder recalled him saying.) Because the Agency's major components had been unaccustomed to working under such central direction, McCone told Kirkpatrick to "move slowly and try avoid stepping on toes as much as possible."⁶²

Chief Intelligence Officer. DDI Robert Amory, who vigorously opposed McCone's nomination, left the Agency in March 1962 to become general counsel at the Bureau of the Budget. Amory—upset that senior analysts had not been consulted about the Bay of Pigs operation—had threatened to resign over McCone's appointment, telling the White House that it was "just the wrong thing...just a cheap political move to put a prominent Republican in so the heat could be taken off the Bay [of Pigs]...a very bad show...." He also believed he had a fair chance of becoming DDCI and decided to quit when McCone indicated he probably would choose a military officer instead.⁶³



Ray Cline (U)

To succeed Amory, McCone picked Ray Cline, a high-ranking intelligence analyst and national estimates officer who had acquired operations experience and an excellent reputation

When Amory resigned, the DCI immediately called Cline back to Washington and, having vetted his name with the White House and the Department of State, to offer him the position of DDI. Cline accepted with the proviso that McCone consult him about covert action projects when an analytical assessment would be helpful. Cline later wrote that "[a]s far as I know he observed this understanding with scrupulous care." The new DDI, an intellectual who had worked his way up through the ranks, helped raise morale in the DI. He also was a blunt and tough bureaucratic infighter, not at all shy about tilting with McCone and the other deputy directors over turf and resources.⁶⁴

Chief Financial Officer. McCone insisted on strengthening the authority of the comptroller to manage CIA finances and manpower. At the Air Force and the AEC, he had considered his comptroller as one of his key advisers, and he intended to do the same at the Agency, whose budget process and money management he found disorganized. He remembered receiving a briefing on the Agency's five-year budget soon after taking over:

I noticed that the fifth year was just a little over double of the first year. So I said: "Now, gentlemen, I'd like another briefing a week from now, and I would like to see the fifth year the same as this year. We will have a flat line across, and we won't have this growth. I expect to be here five years, and I am not going to see this budget doubled in five years." Their chins dropped down, and so they wondered what kind of a character was going to run the CIA. They had never had that kind of command before.

⁶² "Office of the Inspector General," 100–101; transcript of McCone interview with Stewart Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3; Grogan, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962," *ibid.*, box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, 246; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 16–17. Notwithstanding McCone's comment, Kirkpatrick's tertiary status was formalized as of late 1963 in the "emergency line of succession" at CIA that would be invoked if the DCI were incapacitated. After the DDCI came the Executive Director-Comptroller, the DDP, the DDI, the DDS&T, the DDS, the special assistant to the DDS&T, and the ADDP, followed by several senior DDP officers ranked by the prominence of their areas of responsibility. "Emergency Line of Succession for the Central Intelligence Agency," 7 November 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-488, Job 84T00286R, box 5, folder 6.

⁶³ Amory oral history interview in *Spymasters*, 163–65; Carter-Knoche OH, 50; Sherman Kent, "Reminiscences of a Varied Life," 295–60.

⁶⁴ Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 194–95; Ray Cline oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Washington, DC, 30 June 1989 (hereafter Cline/McAuliffe OH), 22.

Cline personnel file no. 57829, HRGM Files, Job 76-00195, box 7, folder 20. The change of DDI disappointed two assistant directors, Sherman Kent and Huntington Sheldon, who considered themselves more qualified than Cline.

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So they went to work on a budget and brought it in to show that the fifth year was about as flat as the current year. And five years later when I left, the budget was [redacted] less than when I took over. And in those years there was never a person who came to me and said that he couldn't do anything because he didn't have the money.⁶⁵ ~~XX~~

Previously, CIA's comptroller reported to the DDS and ran a green-eyeshade shop whose main function was compiling and coordinating material for the annual budget. McCone made the comptroller part of the ODCI and gave the position much greater responsibility over financial and personnel matters. In recognition of that expanded authority, he had the position's salary made equal to those of the IG and general counsel. John Bross, McCone's first comptroller, had worked with budgets as a senior planning officer in the DDP. A respected administrator and an uncontroversial personality, he still did not achieve the control over financial matters that the DCI had wanted—partly because of resistance from the directorates, partly because of the distractions of day-to-day fiscal administration. By mid-1963, McCone concluded that hard budget and resource decisions could only be made by a senior manager unburdened by lower-level administrative responsibilities. McCone then turned to Lyman Kirkpatrick, who told McCone that he would be willing to be comptroller if the position were combined with that of executive director. Otherwise, he would regard the move as a demotion and decline it. The DCI and DDCI then had Kirkpatrick draft a statement of responsibilities for the dual position. All were aware that the deputy directors would be unhappy with it, but McCone told the DDCI, "The hell with it. Issue that notice." Kirkpatrick assumed the twin responsibilities in September, and Bross

became head of a new Intelligence Community coordination staff. Kirkpatrick later wrote that he doubted whether he could have carried out his duties as executive director had he not also had charge of the Agency's finances.⁶⁶ ~~XX~~

Chief Science Officer. Convinced of the importance of technical collection programs and the need to consolidate CIA's science and technology activities, McCone created a fourth directorate, the Directorate of Research (DR), under Herbert Scoville, previously the head of the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) in the DI. The new component developed slowly—largely due to resistance from the DDP and DI, which were reluctant to part with units and responsibilities, and to Scoville's unassertive leadership. In August 1963, McCone reorganized the DR as the Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T) and put the aggressive Albert ("Bud") Wheelon in control. McCone's new directorate quickly became a powerful force within CIA and the Intelligence Community. (The origins and activities of the DS&T are discussed fully in Chapter 9.) ~~XX~~

Deputy DCI. McCone apparently had little to say about the choice of his new DDCI, an appointment that was caught in political currents from the start. President Kennedy suspected that Gen. Charles Cabell, appointed as DDCI in 1953 by President Eisenhower, had leaked information from an official investigation of the Bay of Pigs to the Washington bureau chief of *Fortune*, who then wrote an article highly critical of the administration. Cabell protested his innocence, but rumors of potential replacements soon began to spread around the capital. The White House forced him to resign, effective January 1962. (He subsequently retired from the Air Force.)⁶⁷ (U)

⁶⁵ *Conversation with McCone*, 13–14. McCone's recollection was not entirely accurate. The Agency's budget in 1965 was slightly smaller in real terms than in 1962, but expenditures were not flat; they spiked dramatically in 1963 because of expanded covert action and technical collection programs. "CIA Intelligence Activity Estimates, 1962 through 1969," 21 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 4; "Total CIA Obligations, 1947–1977," ICS Files, Job 79M01476A, box 1, folder 12. Moreover, President Lyndon Johnson's government-wide economy decree in 1964 put a squeeze on the CIA budget by the time McCone left, so the Agency's frugality was not all the DCI's doing. ~~XX~~

⁶⁶ Earman untitled memorandum, 3 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Kirkpatrick, 242–43, 247–48; Headquarters Notice HN 1-11, 20 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23; DDP staff meeting minutes for 9 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; [redacted] "Financial Operations of CIA," vol. 2, 146–47, 153–55; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entries for 19 March 1962 and 4 September 1963; John Bross oral history interview by [redacted] McLean, VA, 23 November 1987, 1–2; [redacted] 191–92; White untitled memorandum to Carter, 4 September 1963, Carter memorandum to McCone, "Reassignment of Comptroller Functions," undated; and Headquarters Notice HN 1-40, "Announcement of Organizational Changes," 26 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 9. As a result of the creation of the joint Executive Director–Comptroller position, the DDS reclaimed responsibility for daily fiscal administration, while a new Office of Budget, Program Analysis, and Manpower reviewed budget and personnel issues and reported directly to Kirkpatrick. ~~XX~~

⁶⁷ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 59–60. The article at issue was Charles J.V. Murphy, "Cuba: The Record Set Straight," *Fortune* 61, no. 9 (September 1961): 92–97, 223–35. Murphy, who said President Kennedy "went ballistic" when he read the piece, later revealed that his source was Adm. Arleigh Burke, a member of the presidential board of inquiry chaired by Gen. Maxwell Taylor. Military historian Trumbull Higgins has suggested that Cabell, "the [A]ir [F]orce's man in the CIA," was sacked "perhaps as much to please the outraged [A]gency over its last-minute loss of air cover [for the Bay of Pigs landing] as to meet the need for more top-level scapegoats." Cabell had declined Rusk's eleventh-hour offer to let him speak to President Kennedy about reinstituting the second air strike that the president had just canceled. Higgins, *The Perfect Failure*, 164. Cabell does not discuss his departure in his autobiography, *A Man of Intelligence*. (U)

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The JCS lobbied to have a military man succeed Cabell. They pointed out that a general or admiral had filled either of the Agency's top two positions since its founding; that a large segment of CIA would fall under military command if war broke out; that the Agency and the Department of Defense had shared operational and logistical responsibilities; and that much of the intelligence that CIA collected pertained to military questions. Also, the Senate Armed Services Committee—particularly its chairman, Richard Russell—clearly indicated at McCone's confirmation hearing in January that it wanted a military officer as DDCI. McCone, however, at first preferred to have a civilian deputy, and specifically mentioned Livingston Merchant from the Department of State—a career Foreign Service officer with experience in Western European and Canadian affairs and then serving as ambassador to Canada. The DCI said a two- or three-star officer would be acceptable, provided that he was “the most competent and experienced...with some intelligence background, and great administrative ability and scientific knowledge.” McCone planned to expand the responsibilities of the DDCI, principally by making him the director of CIA's daily activities as well as its representative on USIB, so the main criterion the DCI used was managerial ability, not military or civilian status. President Kennedy told McCone that White House staffers were recommending a civilian, but the military correspondent for the *New York Times* advised the DCI that an administration faction opposed to his anti-test-ban views was trying to get the DDCI slot filled with a moderate military officer whom it could use to undercut him. After reaffirming that competence should be paramount, McCone then suggested that appointing a military professional would be in everyone's best interests.⁶⁸ ~~✗~~

In early 1962, names of many flag-rank officers were floated in the administration's national security coterie, and nearly 20 got an initial screening by McCone.⁶⁹ One of them was Maj. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, commander of the



Maj. Gen. Marshall Carter (U)
Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

Army Air Defense Center. Carter had held staff positions under Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense George Marshall during 1947–51 and served as chief of staff of the Eighth Army in Korea. In February, Carter met McCone for lunch and a discussion that lasted about an hour. The DCI told Carter he was about the 17th interviewee.⁷⁰

When asked if he was interested in the job, Carter reservedly replied that he had never asked for any post, went where he was told, and had no experience as a member of the Intelligence Community. This self-effacing response did not strike the right note with McCone. Summoned into the public service several times himself, he could understand Carter's dutiful attitude, but he surely would have preferred a deputy who showed some enthusiasm for working under him at CIA. McCone ended the meeting by telling Carter, “Don't call me. If I am interested, I will call you.” ~~✗~~

Soon, however, McCone picked Carter as the best from the list of candidates he had been presented. On 28 February, he sent Carter's name to the president, emphasizing the general's “experience in international political matters” that he said was “unusual for a regular officer of the military establishment.” McCone further noted that Carter had the technical background needed for the deputy's job, and that he was young enough to carry “the heavy work load...under the kind of organization which I am planning.”⁷¹ (U)

In early March, the vice chief of staff of the Army tracked Carter down at a hockey game in Colorado and told him to

⁶⁸ McCone, “Memorandum of Discussion with the Joint Chiefs...January 8, 1962,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 200; Elder, “McCone as DCI (1973),” 144–45, 153–54; E. Henry Knoche oral history interview by Montgomery Rogers, Colorado Springs, CO, 14 May 2001, 34–35; Grogan untitled memorandum about McCone meeting with Hanson Baldwin on 25 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting with the President...January 17, 1962...,” *ibid.*, box 6, folder 1; Carter-Knoche OH, 39–40; Amory oral history in *Spymasters*, 164–65 ~~✗~~

⁶⁹ Principal sources for this paragraph and the next are: Carter/McAuliffe OH, 2–5; McCone calendars, entries for January–March 1962; McCone letter to President Kennedy, 28 January 1962, retrievable from Chief Information Officer/Electronic Records WEB Interface (ERWI) database, doc. no. ado-5255, doc. bar code CIA98-960007048000030002; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President, 8 March 1962,” McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; author's conversations with Mary Carter O'Connor (Marshall Carter's daughter), 4 June 1998 and 14 January 1999; numerous press reports on the DDCI appointment in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 8, and Job 84-00161R, box 4, folder 16, and Office of Public Affairs (OPA) Files, Job 81-00468R, box 9, folder 4; “Intelligence Organizer: Marshall Sylvester Carter,” *New York Times*, 10 March 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Warner, “Memorandum for the Record...Hearing before Senate Armed Services Committee—General Carter's Nomination as DDCI,” 29 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 6 ~~✗~~

⁷⁰ Carter later thought that Robert Lovett, a former secretary of defense and a pillar of the foreign policy establishment, had put his name forward. (U)

⁷¹ McCone letter to President Kennedy, 28 January 1962, ERWI doc. no. ado-5255, doc. bar code CIA98-960007048000030002. (U)

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go to Washington immediately to meet the president and the DCI. On 8 March in the Oval Office, Carter recalled:

McCone said he had selected me as his Deputy Director, providing that was acceptable to the President...they did not ask me if I wanted the job, nor did Mr. McCone at any time ask me if I wanted the job.... I presume that McCone had finally given up finding the guy he wanted and would settle for whatever he could get.... Mr. McCone never told me how he happened to select me, and I never asked him. I have a gut feeling that he probably was shopping around for somebody going back to the era in which he had been with the Atomic Energy Commission and possibly before that. (U)

When the White House announced Carter's appointment, it emphasized his "considerable experience in international affairs." Presumably that and his demonstrated competence at running large military commands made him acceptable to the president (and McCone). Carter's nomination encountered no opposition on Capitol Hill. His confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee lasted only 15 minutes, and the full Senate approved his appointment unanimously.⁷² (U)

Carter presented a near-total contrast to McCone in appearance, personality, and demeanor. The *New York Times* described him as "a relaxed, informal, 'feet-on-the-desk,' non-spit-and-polish type...jaunty, self-confident, articulate.... [M]any girlish hearts flutter at the Pentagon when he strolls down the corridor, laughing heartily in conversation with his colleagues and—shocking for a military man—whistling loudly." One senior Agency officer called him "impish," and another remembered him as "bald, pudgy...an incorrigible prankster whose impudence, roguery, and charm compensated for some of McCone's coldness and aloofness." One of the first things visitors to his office saw was a large sign on his desk bearing the incongruous warning "CRINGE" in bright red letters. Lying nearby was an OSS assassination pistol. Carter always kept within reach

what he called his "goosing stick"—a telescoping pointer that he used to prod the backsides of longwinded briefers. He occasionally referred to the Agency as "McCone Island."⁷³ (U)

Two anecdotes convey Carter's offbeat and irreverent sense of humor, of which the staid McCone was often indirectly the target. The DCI suite at the new headquarters building was designed with a "swing office"—a small meeting room between it and the DDCI's area. Like the telephone system that McCone had removed, the space was one of Allen Dulles's ideas for encouraging informal communication with his deputies—or as "Red" White put it, so that the DCI and DDCI "could scoot back and forth and have a little place they could tuck people into." McCone did not want anyone dropping in unannounced or occupying a room he wanted to use, however, so he ordered the door between the swing office and the DDCI's suite sealed off the night before Carter reported for duty. To needle the DCI for ordering this midnight remodeling, Carter stuck a rubber hand into a seam in the paneling on his side of the wall, making it look as if McCone had been trapped as the last sheet was nailed up. On a later occasion, McCone mentioned at a staff meeting that he wanted special brands of cosmetics and toilet paper put in the private lavatory in his suite for use by the future Mrs. McCone during her visits. Carter lampooned what he regarded as the DCI's high society *hauteur* by jotting on the meeting minutes that he planned to stock his own lavatory with corn cobs, Sunkist orange wrappers, and a Sears catalogue.⁷⁴ (U)

Carter's effort to be "one of the guys" did not always sit well with policymakers and Agency colleagues, and undercut his authority and stature. For example, [redacted] an Agency officer who served as executive secretary of the NSC's Special Group and 303 Committee, recalls that McGeorge Bundy "couldn't stand" Carter's habit of opening meetings with an "off-color" joke. Some CIA managers did not always take the DDCI seriously and either avoided raising matters with him while he was acting DCI or bypassed him and dealt directly with McCone. Carter chided senior

⁷² US Senate, *Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services...on the Nomination of Maj. Gen. Marshall Sylvester Carter for Appointment as Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency...March 29, 1962* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1962). The Agency announcement of Carter's appointment came in Headquarters Notice HN 20-37, 3 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80B00269R, box 4, folder 23. (U)

⁷³ "Intelligence Organizer: Marshall Sylvester Carter," *New York Times*, 10 March 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 6; Brugioni, *Eye-ball to Eye-ball*, 85; author's conversation with Mary Carter O'Connor, 14 June 1998; Toni Hiley (CIA Curator) memorandum to author, 15 February 2000; James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 101. (U)

⁷⁴ Ranelagh, 415; Brugioni [redacted] "Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 11; author's conversation with Mary Carter O'Connor, 14 January 1999. According to Carter, McCone first noticed the rubber hand the only time he went into the DDCI's office—just before he left Langley. Carter-Knoche OH, 25. Contrary to Brugioni (*Eye-ball to Eye-ball*, 85), Carter did not actually put the rustic items in his lavatory. (U)

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staffers about these dodges, reminding them that "all of the DCI's authorities relating to Agency administration and operations have been delegated to the DDCI[,] and that when the DDCI approves of various proposals, that approval stands. In the event of a *reclama*, the proposer is to take it up with the DDCI."⁷⁵ ~~(S)~~

Richard Helms described McCone and Carter's relationship as resembling that between a military commander and a subordinate officer.⁷⁶ The DDCI reserved his jokes and capers for times when the DCI was not around. When he was, Helms recalled, Carter was "strictly business" and comported himself in a "West Point" manner. Carter described his interaction with McCone as "so formal and so part of a machine operation that there was no interchange of personality...I never did feel that Mr. McCone had accepted me as his true Deputy...." "I don't think I ever had the guts to call him 'John.'" The personal and professional distance between the two men widened after McCone blamed Carter for mishandling the runup to the Cuban missile crisis (discussed in Chapter 5), and the DCI often criticized his deputy for failing to secure consensus among CIA components when they argued over estimates.~~(S)~~

Despite their problems, McCone did not backtrack from his commitment to using the DDCI principally as the "general manager" of CIA. Carter's prior record showed he was fully satisfactory as an administrator, and McCone left him in charge as acting DCI over 20 percent of the time. Still, McCone remarked, he thought it necessary to "keep my finger on the [Agency's] day-to-day operations—most particularly those that had to do with the relationship with the other agencies and with the White House and...Congress." Besides being the Agency's resident chief executive, Carter also served as its representative on USIB and McCone's principal liaison with the military hierarchy; frequently

briefed PFIAB in the DCI's place; met with new US ambassadors heading overseas; and spent a good portion of his time on training and staffing matters—notably among the latter, terminations of "surplus personnel" and the Agency's special retirement act—and the organization of the new science and technology directorate.⁷⁷ ~~(S)~~

Other Senior Personnel. McCone kept in place four senior officers whose expertise and experience he valued: Lawrence Houston as general counsel, John S. Warner as legislative counsel, Sherman Kent as chairman of the Board of National Estimates (BNE) and head of ONE, and Lawrence White as DDS (even though their relationship was strained from the outset because of the DCI's fussiness about facilities and logistics). McCone moved his executive assistant, John Earman, into the IG post because Kirkpatrick did not get along with him. Walter Elder, a career DI officer then serving as the DDCI's executive assistant, moved up to become the DCI's adjutant. Stanley Grogan, the incumbent public affairs officer, remained until November 1963, when he retired after suffering a heart attack; Paul M. Chretien, a VIP liaison officer, replaced him. Another important fixture on the DCI's staff was Terrence ("Terry") Lee, McCone's private secretary since 1942, whom he brought from California to Virginia to ensure that his wide-ranging personal business did not become entangled in his official duties as DCI. Lee knew more about McCone's affairs than anyone and handled a myriad of administrative and business details for his longtime employer. He could reproduce McCone's signature and saved untold hours of staff time dealing with routine correspondence. He worked so hard that some Agency officers referred to him as "the slave." While at CIA he took a three-week vacation to Europe—seemingly very generous on McCone's part, except that it was Lee's first lengthy time off in 11 years.⁷⁸ ~~(S)~~

⁷⁵ [redacted] oral history interview by [redacted] Chevy Chase, MD, 27 November 1984 (hereafter [redacted] OH), 23; DCI morning meeting minutes for 31 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 348.~~(S)~~

⁷⁶ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: author's conversation with Helms, 29 January 1998; John McCone oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Pebble Beach, CA, 16–18 May 1989 (hereafter McCone/McAuliffe OH), 26; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 2; Carter/McAuliffe OH, 8–10, 12; Carter-Knoche OH, 13, 41–42; Knoche, "Notes for DDCI, 7 May 1964," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 10; "DDCI Daily Log," 23 May 1962, *ibid.*, folder 9; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 7; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 18.~~(S)~~

⁷⁷ As de facto director of CIA, Carter oversaw implementation of a forced retirement process called the Professional Manpower Control Program for the Clandestine Services—or the 701 Program, as it came to be called after the issuance of Agency regulation 20-701 in February 1961. The program was intended to smooth out the age and grade "hump" in the DDP and allow for the recruitment and promotion of young case officers. The "surplus personnel" were designated before McCone became DCI, but the administration of most terminations occurred during 1962–63 and created some morale problems for him and his deputies to address. Nearly [redacted] were separated from the Agency by the end of 1963, when the 701 Program ended. CIA's overan retirement policy became the subject of the first legislation concerning the Agency since 1949. In October 1964, the CIA Retirement Act became law. Carter and Kirkpatrick took the executive lead in the administrative and legislative work-up of the act, which led to the establishment of the CIA Retirement and Disability System (CIARDS) in late April 1965 just as McCone was leaving. [redacted] "Reluctant Retirees: Outplacement, 'Second Career' Counseling, and Retiree Placement, 1957–1967," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-2 (January 1971), part II; [redacted] The Office of Personnel: Special Activities Staff, 1957–70," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-3 (November 1971), 13–19; [redacted] The Development of Retirement Policy in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1947–68," DDS Historical Series Paper No. OP-4 (June 1971), parts VIII and IX.~~(S)~~

~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (I): Director of CIA (U)***Refocusing on Analysis (U)**

McCone quickly set about changing the ways CIA produced and disseminated finished intelligence to policymakers, which he regarded as the Agency's primary mission. He was more engaged intellectually and administratively in the analytic process than his predecessor had been. As DCI, he thought that one of his main responsibilities was assuring that the Agency's evaluated intelligence was disseminated more thoroughly inside the community and downtown and, more importantly, was read and respected. Kennedy administration principals McCone spoke to soon after his appointment told him that was not always the case. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, for one, complained that CIA products needed to be made more meaningful and useful. Other senior officials confirmed McCone's suspicions that significant intelligence reports and analyses were not "getting through" until events had overtaken them, and that Agency publications were not being read because they replicated information available elsewhere sooner.⁷⁹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone's intellectual characteristics—broad knowledge, rapid retention, keen logic, intense concentration—influenced his approach to CIA analysis as much as the above-mentioned concerns about what the businessman in him would have called the Agency's "customer base." He was impressed with the caliber of DI analysts and enjoyed the give-and-take involved in developing an assessment. "[T]he thing I like about this work is the intellectual side of it. I've found an amazingly capable organization. There's nothing like this organization here from the standpoint of intellectual ability and academic training...anyplace [else] in government or industry." Understandably, then, an ONE veteran described McCone as "going over each line" of an estimate "as if it were a corporate mortgage," and DDCI Carter's senior aide has remarked that McCone "did his homework.... I've never known him to show up cold to consider an estimate." R. Jack Smith, the head of OCI at the

time and a regular briefer of the DCI, has described McCone's thought processes as well as anyone:

I came to know the quality of John McCone's mind intimately.... He plugged into the briefing like a five-pronged power tube in a high-fidelity amplifier. Nothing got by him. Now and then I would look up from my notes as he barked out a sharp question and realize that he was inexplicably angry. It invariably developed that I had just said something that was contrary to a view he had expressed in some other setting...possibly a year or two previously. Organized like a meticulous file cabinet, his mind could produce everything he knew, precisely and instantly. Before a new entry could be made, his mind had to be satisfied that it accorded with material already filed or that adjustments were feasible and proper.

In contrast to Dulles's reputedly lackadaisical approach to reviewing estimates, Smith recalls that

McCone would set a meeting at four o'clock, and we would walk through the door at four o'clock and he would have read the estimate. He'd say, "I have three questions on this Estimate, and here they are—one, two, three." And "How would you defend your judgment that this is the case?" And you would defend it. He never overrode anybody. He had a marvelous mind, very disciplined, hard, clean, beautifully controlled, and a marvelous memory.⁸⁰ (U)

McCone was not at all reluctant to critique analyses and estimates as a college professor might review a freshman's political science term paper. McCone once called Sherman Kent very early one morning with blunt comments about an estimate, such as "On page 20, you say this...Can you prove it?" On another occasion, he returned an analysis of Vietnamese ~~SECRET~~ movements because it did not delve sufficiently into the ~~SECRET~~ organization, goals, and

⁷⁸ ~~SECRET~~ "Office of the Inspector General," 108–9; Elder personnel file no. 315700, Office of Personnel Files; press clippings on Grogan in HS Files, HS/HC-326, Job 84T00286R, box 1, folder 11; Elder, "Support for McCone," 20; Phillips, *The Night Watch*, 124; author's conversation with Dino Brugioni, 30 October 1998.

⁷⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara and Mr. Gilpatrick, 4 December 1961," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. Walter Rostow, 26 December 1961," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 196. On Dulles's and McCone's different degrees of engagement with the analytic process, see Richard Kovar, "Mr. Current Intelligence: An Interview with Richard Lehman," *Studies* 43, no. 2 (1999–2000): 27; and Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 2, 14. ~~SECRET~~

⁸⁰ Transcript of McCone meeting with journalist Marquis Childs, 17 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 1; Carter-Knoche OH, 28; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 151; Ranelagh, 416, citing interview with Smith on 15 July 1983. A slightly different version of Smith's anecdote is in *The Unknown CIA*, 150–51. (U)

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activities. He suggested to Ray Cline that the analyst compare and contrast [redacted] and he included some *New York Times* articles—perhaps to make the point that CIA analysts should not be outdone by journalists. McCone's attention to detail showed in late 1963 when he sent back to Cline a study on Soviet grain production. He disagreed with its judgment that a "return of normal weather would permit a sharp recovery [in output] in 1964," contending instead that a recovery would be "long and tedious" because of deficiencies in the Soviet Union's agricultural infrastructure. [redacted]

[redacted] The DCI demonstrated his concern for the reputation of the Agency's analyses after outside academics in 1964 criticized its methods for analyzing the Soviet economy—in particular, how it calculated the gross national product. He sought immediate assurance from ORR that Agency techniques were valid and rigorous.⁸¹ ~~XX~~

Different Processes and Products (U)

McCone instituted or, through Cline, ratified new procedures and products that expanded and rationalized Agency analysis, and better enabled it to target issues in response to consumer demands. McCone's selection of Cline, with his brilliant intellect and good connections downtown, was ideal for these purposes. The DCI and the DDI encouraged analysts to inquire about policymakers' concerns, to package finished intelligence in an accessible form, and to deliver it to the right people at the right time. "[W]e undertook to produce whatever they wanted us to produce," recalled OCI officer Richard Lehman. Intelligence memoranda and ad hoc briefings joined serial publications and USIB committee reports as regular vehicles for Agency analysis. Cline set up a new Senior Intelligence Officer Team for Policy Support, under a special assistant for policy support, as a channel for bringing policymakers' immediate interests to the attention of the analytical offices. (Chester Cooper of ONE was the first designee for the special assistant position.) The Special Research Staff, established in late 1962, integrated all DI resources for an in-depth study of a few key political questions, such as the Sino-Soviet split. Also in late 1962, OCI created a cadre of Senior Intelligence Support Officers, drawn from several DI offices and attached to the OCI

Watch Office. The SISOs maintained close relations with operational, planning, and policymaking components inside and outside CIA and initiated support activities when problems arose.⁸² ~~XX~~

McCone did not let Agency analyses speak for themselves, however, nor did he rely solely on senior officers to convey the facts and "bottom line" of the assessments. He delivered many briefings to the president, the NSC, and Congress, especially when major events were breaking. He was adept at identifying the relevant audience and adapting the content and tone of his briefings accordingly. The DDCI's deputy, "Hank" Knoche, later observed that "[McCone's] strength was to be able to take the intelligence product, whether it was written or oral or otherwise, and—I don't mean this in a derogatory way—merchandise it. He knew exactly who to go talk to about it—maybe the President, maybe a senator, maybe the secretary of state, whatever."⁸³ ~~XX~~

Among other durable changes Cline made with McCone's blessing were expansion of the Office of the DDI (ODDI) and movement of some management autonomy away from the subordinate offices to reduce their parochialism. Analysts throughout the directorate received greater access to sensitive compartmented intelligence, and some branched out into military issues after changes at the Department of Defense reduced the analytical capabilities of the service intelligence units. ORR and OCI, for example, both established military analysis elements in mid-1962. ORR, which performed the bulk of the Agency's analysis of the Soviet Union, was reorganized into a five-division Economic Research Area and a new Military Economics Division. The latter quickly became accepted as the community's principal producer of comprehensive assessments of strategic weapons systems in communist countries. CIA's responsibilities for basic research grew substantially in 1962, when the Department of State transferred to the Agency its role in producing the encyclopedic *National Intelligence Surveys*. A new Collection Guidance Staff (CGS) centralized the all-source collection effort that provided the grist for intelligence research and publication. In 1963, the Operations Center came into being, although disputes over its pri-

⁸¹ Victoria S. Price, "The DCI's Role in Producing Strategic Intelligence Estimates," 66–67; McCone untitled memorandum to Cline, 14 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; McCone untitled memorandum to Cline, 4 November 1963, *ibid.*, box 5, folder 18 [redacted]

⁸³ Carter-Knoche OH, 5–6. ~~XX~~

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mary function (producing current intelligence or collecting and disseminating information) and subordination (under OCI or CGS) were unresolved until late 1964, when Cline made it a staff component of the ODDI and gave OCI administrative authority over it. The Office of Central Reference ventured into writing and publishing with the *Biographic Handbooks* and the monthly series *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments*. Over time, both products became highly valued and widely read downtown.⁸⁴ ~~(S)~~

McCone wanted to ensure that CIA's daily publication for the chief executive and the very highest-level policymakers, the *President's Intelligence Checklist (PICL)*, was meeting the needs of its intended readership. The *PICL* appeared in June 1961 as a product tailored to President Kennedy's requirements and carried sensitive material that could not be used in the more broadly disseminated *Current Intelligence Bulletin* (produced since 1951). Soon after taking over at Langley, McCone sent out a "customer satisfaction survey" to find out what the publication's other readers thought of it. Roswell Gilpatric, answering for McNamara, considered the *PICL* "of definite value" and praised "the succinctness and clarity with which information is reported and evaluated." That was the general tenor of the responses, and occasional changes in content and style kept up readers' interest. Its primary audience—and the analysts who wrote it—clearly were pleased, recalled R. Jack Smith:

President Kennedy...entered enthusiastically into an exchange of comments with [the *PICL*s] producers, sometimes praising an account, sometimes criticizing a comment, once objecting to "boondocks" as not an accepted word. For current intelligence people, this was heaven on earth! A president who read your material thoughtfully and told you what he liked and did not like!⁸⁵ ~~(S)~~

As part of his pragmatic consumer focus, McCone wanted to avoid overloading policymakers with superfluous publications that also wasted Agency resources. He discontinued a new DI product, the *Weekly Survey of Cold War Crisis Situations*, in October 1962 after a one-year run. Prepared by ONE, the *Weekly Survey* had been established to warn senior US policymakers of potential flash points in the East-West conflict. Most readers concluded that the publication duplicated information in the *Current Intelligence Bulletin*, the *PICL*, and other current products, so McCone ordered its suspension. In addition, the *National Intelligence Survey* program was simplified to concentrate on producing basic global intelligence for strategic-level planners through annual publications known as *General Surveys* and, slightly later, with the *Basic Intelligence Factbook* (the forerunner of the *World Factbook*). Finally, McCone directed that all DI finished intelligence products be cut in size wherever feasible to make them more readable.⁸⁶ ~~(S)~~

McCone took a special interest in the NIEs and special national intelligence estimates (SNIEs) that ONE produced in coordination with other community components. These assessments and forecasts of political, military, and economic developments throughout the world represented the sense of the community and were disseminated over the DCI's signature. Naturally, McCone scrutinized the product and looked for ways by which ONE could improve its work. In early 1962, he directed the IG to examine the estimative machinery to determine whether it had the right personnel and whether its products stood the test of time. Noting that McNamara had said he got as much out of the *New York Times* as he did from ONE estimates, McCone wanted the IG to gauge consumers' reactions. He suggested to Kirkpatrick that the investigators see if the British system of estimates might suggest some improvements in the way the Agency did its own. In general, McCone reinforced a trend begun late in Dulles's term away from CIA-generated country papers and toward policy-specific estimates. (Already by

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early 1962, half of the estimates had been unscheduled, added to ONE's program at the request of consumers.)⁸⁷ ~~XX~~

During McCone's directorship ONE developed a new style of presentation and argumentation in the NIEs. The estimates laid out the various sides of a question rather than reach one "most probable" judgment, as Dulles had preferred. Sherman Kent explained the change by observing that policymakers often preferred that analysts treat the variables in a situation instead of offering a forecast of the outcome.⁸⁸ ~~XX~~

One point of contention in McCone's generally amiable relationship with Cline concerned the line of authority between the Agency's estimative entities—ONE and BNE—and the DCI and the DDI, respectively.⁸⁹ Organizationally, ONE and BNE were located in the DI. Cline believed that the broad mandate he had received under McCone for coordinating, producing, and disseminating finished intelligence extended to the estimates as well. As DDI, he was charged with providing intelligence support to the DCI as both head of CIA and chairman of USIB. Cline found that the distinction McCone drew between the roles of D/CIA and DCI "diluted and fuzzed" the DDI's duties. Where estimates were involved, the DDI lost substantive responsibility over a high-profile analytical activity but still had to care for it administratively. After a "humiliating" experience with an erroneous estimate about Soviet missiles in Cuba (see Chapter 5), Cline told McCone that "you should either make me your USIB estimates spokesman, with authority (under you) for NIEs, or set the Board of Estimates outside my administrative jurisdiction."⁹⁰ ~~XX~~

McCone would not accept that either-or proposition. He made it clear to Cline that he considered BNE "his" board, speaking for the community and reporting directly to him as USIB chairman and senior intelligence adviser to the president. When it came time for Cline to write a performance evaluation on BNE chairman Kent—which the previous DDI regularly had done—McCone told Kent, "I write your fitness reports." The bureaucratic outcome to the dispute came in March 1964 when the headquarters regula-

tion governing the DI was revised. In the wiring diagram accompanying the revision, BNE was placed outside the DI, with a dashed line connecting it to the DCI and ONE. ~~XX~~

A Net Plus (U)

For all the abovementioned changes, McCone nonetheless realized early on that a reservoir of dissatisfaction with Agency analysis would always exist downtown, regardless of how convincingly the products were cast and how promptly they were delivered. The intelligence process had a dimension of reciprocity that was not always appreciated across the Potomac River. CIA had an obligation to produce useful products, but policymakers had to be willing to be informed, and to allow themselves to be aware that they had been informed. In April 1962, rebutting criticism about an intelligence failure when, to the West's surprise, the Berlin Wall went up the previous year, McCone wrote: "Successful warning is essentially a two-fold process; if warning is to be effective, not only must the alert be given, but the consumer of intelligence must accept the fact that he has in fact been warned." Similarly, CIA would never avoid falling under the harsh light of hindsight, no matter how proficient it became at analysis. As McCone observed, "The thought that because an indicator turns out to be significant, it must have been recognizable as significant before the event," always would arise in the minds of outsiders who wanted to "substitute an after-the-fact appraisal for the contemporaneous analyst."⁹⁰ ~~XX~~

On balance, however, McCone's contemporaries thought the improvements he instituted made CIA's analytical products more rigorous, timely, and relevant and were among his most salient and lasting accomplishments. R. Jack Smith has lauded McCone as "the man who did more than any other to improve the quality of our reporting and estimating." McCone himself thought that his main achievement a year and a half into his directorship was upgrading how CIA produced "a careful and considered evaluation and appraisal of all information...which might bear on the contest between international communism and freedom." "Every war of this century, including World War I, has started because of inad-

⁸⁷ Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 22 March 1962; "Semi-Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 1 October 1961–31 March 1962," 7, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 12, folder 227. ~~XX~~

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⁹⁰ McCone untitled memorandum to PFIAB, 30 April 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 5. ~~XX~~

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equate intelligence and incorrect estimates and evaluations...[b]ut war over Cuba was avoided because of intelligence success.... Although intelligence is not a measurable commodity, that is at least a partial measure of its value."⁹¹ (U)

Other Early Administrative Matters (U)

Completing the Move to Langley (U)

By McCone's tenure, CIA had long occupied a scattering of accommodations around the city, including its complex at 2430 E Street NW, an abandoned roller rink nearby, and deteriorating temporary buildings on the Mall left over from World War I. Those quarters were crowded, uncomfortable, and expensive to secure, and created serious communications problems in an era when secure telephones did not exist and classified documents had to be hand-carried between offices. Allen Dulles's solution was to build a single Headquarters building for CIA at a remote and easily protected site in Langley, Virginia. Design work on the campus-like compound began in mid-1956, the first ground was broken in late 1957, the cornerstone was laid in November 1959, and the first occupants (from the DI) began moving in during September 1961.⁹² ~~(S)~~

McCone regarded the geographical consolidation of CIA as an important part of his effort to centralize control over it. He wanted the Headquarters building filled up as quickly as possible and made a point of occupying an office there immediately to symbolize his own presence and authority. Moreover, he was sensitive about the perquisites and comforts of high position and insisted on working in surroundings that suited his tastes. Right after his appointment, he began complaining to DDS White about construction and logistical delays, and once he moved into temporary workspace at Headquarters after his swearing-in, he expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of work on his own suite. He was disappointed that only [] employees were in the new building when he took over but reluctantly accepted

that no more would relocate until the whole DDP wing was ready in early 1962. He had his personal secretary, Terry Lee, check the progress on the executive offices every day. White wrote at the time that "Mr. McCone is going to be champing at the bit until he is installed in his seventh floor offices, and we should do everything we can to expedite their completion." They were finally ready in March 1962. The DCI was not pleased with the parking arrangements or the heating system, either, and sometimes called White to have the temperature in his office adjusted. By September 1962, the new Headquarters was almost 93 percent occupied, with over [] employees working there. After security concerns were raised about the four parcels of privately owned land adjacent to the compound, McCone ordered a study of the feasibility of buying them. []

CIA's new environs affected organizational relationships and cultures in ways that reinforced McCone's plans for change. One of his goals was to begin breaching the wall of compartmentation between the DI and the DDP. Now that the overt and covert parts of CIA were sharing quarters for the first time, meetings and casual contacts eroded some of the suspicion and tension that had hindered cooperation between analysts and operators. The relocation also improved communication throughout the Agency—an essential part of McCone's effort to put its sprawling activities under his and his deputies' control. Before the move, strict management was hindered by components' physical separation and the lack of secure telephones and a rapid courier service. Afterward, distances between offices shrank from, in some cases, many city blocks to at most a few floors or corridors. Executives could schedule short-notice meetings conveniently and drop by each other's offices for informal discussions, while secure telephones and pneumatic tubes enabled officers to exchange information and documents quickly. In addition, the collocation of the Office of Central Reference and the DI gave analysts ready access to full library facilities and specialized repositories of informa-

⁹¹ McCone, "Memorandum of discussions between Mr. Stewart Alsop and Mr. McCone...", 12 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 5; Ranelagh, 416, citing interview with Smith on 15 July 1983; McCone quoted in Alsop and Braden, 264. (U)

⁹² [] "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," passim. (U)

⁹³ [] 235; White diary notes for 29 and 30 November and 4 December 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 20 September 1962; [] "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," 136 n. 9; "Chronology of DCI Office Space," 6 May 1971, HS Files, HS/HC-429, Job 84T00286R, box 3, folder 1. As a civil defense precaution, McCone wanted an emergency relocation center for CIA constructed outside the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. As AEC chairman, he had learned details about the inept evacuation exercise the US government had conducted in 1956, and, especially after the Cuban missile crisis, he wanted to ensure that a small-scale CIA survived a nuclear strike against the capital. []

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McCone looks over a model of the Original Headquarters Building. (U)

tion, helping them produce the high-quality, timely assessments the DCI demanded. Working conditions at Langley were far superior to those across the river, and the climate controls, availability of food and banking services, new furniture, larger workspaces, and woodland setting improved the morale and, more importantly to McCone, the efficiency and productivity of most employees.⁹⁴ (U)

⁹⁴ Some older hands, however, found the new building coldly modernistic, gray, and sterile despite its semirural surroundings. As with an old baseball glove, they preferred the Mall and E Street offices for their well-worn "feel," and for the memories they harbored and the sense of shared triumphs and adversities they evoked. "The real trouble with this new building," an Agency officer was quoted as saying in 1964, "is that it tends to make an honest woman of the old madam—you know, no spittoons, keep the antimacassars clean, and no champagne in the morning. We ought to be lurking in scrabby old hide-outs, with the plaster peeling and stopped-up toilets. There's something about the atmosphere of this building that leads to too many memos, too many meetings, and not enough dirty work." Alsop and Braden, 263. (U)

The trek to suburbia took CIA geographically out of the close-knit downtown policymaking community, causing a marked dropoff in day-to-day contacts with the executive branch. Although this isolation forced most Agency employees to turn inward professionally and socially, it forced senior management to work harder at reaching out to administration officials, community counterparts, and allies in Congress and the press. This demand suited McCone perfectly well, given the priority he placed on his responsibilities as DCI and on the "political" roles he assumed as a presidential policy adviser and the White House's intelligence liaison to Capitol Hill and the Republican Party. (U)

One component that the move to Langley put even more out of the mainstream was the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC). When McCone became DCI, NPIC was located, as its predecessors had been, above the former Steuart Motors automobile dealership, a few blocks from Union Station. Although it was "[a] squalid building amid...squalid surroundings," according to Dino Brugioni, it was relatively convenient when most of the rest of CIA was downtown. NPIC had grown rapidly during and after the Cuban missile crisis, and McCone wanted to reward it for its stellar performance in that episode by giving it a bigger and better building. A warehouse called Building 213 at the Washington Navy Yard was selected, and, as with the Headquarters complex, McCone closely watched the renovation and relocation in his best, gruff style. He hectored "Red" White to make the upgrades as quickly as possible—"I want you to come back and tell me in 24 hours when you are going to finish the building.... That's not good enough. You go back and sharpen your pencil again"—and eventually got so impatient that he arbitrarily set a deadline of 1 January 1963 for full occupancy and operation and so informed President Kennedy. At the same time, he insisted that costs be kept down—even though his rush deadline required that contracts be expedited, making them more expensive.⁹⁵ ~~XX~~

The harried White succeeded. On New Year's Day, he notified McCone that Building 213 was ready. Expecting at least a clipped "Good job," he instead got no answer; the DCI was out of town. After taking a tour in mid-January,

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~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (I): Director of CIA (U)*

NPIC's first home: the top four floors of the Stewart Motor Car Company Building, 5th Street and New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC.



NPIC's new facility at Building 213, Washington Navy Yard ~~(S)~~



In January 1963, NPIC moved to its present location, Building 213, 1st and M Streets, SE, in the Washington Navy Yard. The building underwent a major renovation and expansion in the early 1980s.

McCone complained that the new facility was "out of line with Headquarters" and claimed that White had [redacted] [redacted] You've got so much gingerbread out there that I would be afraid to take a congressman within 10 miles of the place." He contended that the only unusual expenditures should have been for dust and temperature control. According to Brugioni, McCone noticed piles

of walnut paneling awaiting installation and told NPIC Director Arthur Lundahl that it was too fancy to be used all over the building. Lundahl assured him that the paneling was intended only for the entrance and reception area, even though the architectural plan called for hanging it throughout the facility. The paneling was put up only where Lundahl had told the DCI it would be. McCone told his staff to

⁹⁵ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 191; White [redacted] OH, 36; Brugioni and [redacted]

"Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 12; [redacted]

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find out how the Building 213 project "got out of hand." White prepared a thick report that said the acquisition and renovation had cost [redacted] was attributable to the DCI's crash schedule, and [redacted] was spent as an emergency fee at his direction. After receiving the report, McCone never said any more about it.⁹⁶ ~~(S)~~

A Soft Landing for Dulles (U)

McCone directly handled the potentially delicate task of Allen Dulles's transition although, according to Lyman Kirkpatrick, "he didn't have a high regard for Allen. They conversed, but there was a lack of warmth." McCone and Dulles together formulated the terms of the consulting contract under which the ex-director would work on his proposed book on intelligence. The DCI ratified the procedures whereby Dulles would have access to CIA facilities and records, could discuss his work with Agency officers, and would not rebut open-source accounts with classified information. After Dulles decided his book would be an "independent," commercial product, and because of continuing controversy over his collaborator, *Fortune* writer Charles Murphy—author of the Bay of Pigs story that led to DDCI Cabell's dismissal—McCone had his predecessor moved from the E Street compound and questioned why Dulles had billed the Agency for over [redacted] in consulting fees. Then, for reasons not clear in the record, McCone quickly changed his mind. Possibly his second thoughts owed to his need for good relations with the Clandestine Services; possibly the White House intervened, wanting to make Dulles's exit as gentle and graceful as it could. Whatever the reason, Dulles would remain a consultant, retain access to Agency space, and be able to use Murphy, who was granted a top secret clearance. Dulles's book, *The Craft of*

Intelligence, was published in 1963 after undergoing CIA review to prevent unauthorized disclosure of sources and methods. McCone made no recorded comments about it at the time.⁹⁷ ~~(S)~~

After One Year (U)

By the end of 1962, McCone had achieved most of his major objectives for changing CIA's organization and senior leadership, exercising greater control over its activities, and raising its stature within the administration. He had overhauled the ODCI and brought under his direct authority the important functions of finance, legislative liaison, legal affairs, and internal inspections. He had delegated day-to-day administration of the Agency to the DDCI, the executive director, and the reconstituted Executive Committee, thus freeing himself to deal with policymakers, the Intelligence Community, and Congress as he and the president had intended he should. His handpicked cadre of senior lieutenants was carrying out his requirements for analysis, operations, and administration. (U)

The improvements he wanted in CIA's analytic processes and scientific and technological undertakings were well underway, as was the implementation of more controls on covert actions (to be detailed in subsequent chapters). Although McCone's unsentimental style had bruised the feelings of a number of officers, overall he had helped restore a good measure of the Agency's morale and prestige. Its work was again regarded as important to the White House, and McCone had positioned it to better perform the clandestine and estimative missions it was assigned.⁹⁸ (U)

⁹⁶ [redacted]; McCone calendars, entry for 16 January 1963; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 17 January 1963; White [redacted] 01, 50-57; Brugioni and [redacted] Lawrence K. White on the Directors," 12-13. ~~(S)~~

⁹⁷ Hersh, *The Old Boys*, 435 citing interview with Kirkpatrick on 11 May 1982; McCone untitled memorandum to Elder, 13 May 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 12; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion... on July 9, 1962, with Mr. Arthur Dean," and correspondence between McCone and Dulles during July-August 1962, *ibid.*, box 5, folder 9; Grose, 539. Dulles's book presented an early case of the problem of distinguishing officially acknowledged or releasable information from the larger body of general public knowledge. ~~(S)~~

⁹⁸ Two documents provide good synopses of the internal changes McCone instituted during his first year: McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Redefining the Role of the Director of Central Intelligence and Strengthening the Internal Organization of the Central Intelligence Agency," 11 May 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-485, Job 84T00286R, box 5, folder 3; and Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "After Action Report on the Findings of the Working Group," 23 October 1962, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 4, folder 23. (U)

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Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)

John McCone regarded coordinating the work of the Intelligence Community to be more important than overseeing CIA's activities. He believed that the DCI should be the chief intelligence officer in the US government, not merely the head of an intelligence agency, and that he could best serve the country and the president by ensuring that the community, not just CIA, provided the most accurate and timely national intelligence possible. He was forthright about his objective, telling a senior Department of State official early on that "I intend to be a power in this administration and to give the whole Intelligence Community a bigger voice." The extent to which he achieved that purpose depended on his ability to fashion bureaucratic instruments to assist him, to negotiate conflicts with CIA's rival departments, and to maintain good relations with the White House and with Congress and other institutions of accountability.¹ ~~(S)~~

McCone did not think the DCI could be USIB chairman and CIA's representative on the board at the same time; trying to perform both functions simultaneously would impair his ability to represent either the president's or the Agency's interests. As a result of the new arrangement, McCone, as USIB chairman, often overruled his DDCI, Marshall Carter, in favor of the Departments of State or Defense in deliberations over collection priorities or NIEs. McCone disagreed with, and did not act upon, several recommendations for managing the community and CIA that PFIAB made after the Bay of Pigs disaster. For example, he believed housing the DCI in the Executive Office of the President would be too disruptive; he thought the DCI should work with USIB, not the Bureau of the Budget, in reviewing intelligence estimates; he strongly disagreed with taking clandestine activities and covert operations out of CIA; and he saw no value in changing the Agency's name to give it a "new look."² ~~(S)~~

"Chairman of the Board" (U)

McCone asserted this leadership role from the outset. The day he was sworn in, he got approval from Attorney General Robert Kennedy (the president's personal "overseer" of CIA) to delegate day-to-day authority over the Agency to the DDCI. At his first meeting with his deputy directors, he announced that he intended to devote as much time as he could to managing the work of all Intelligence Community departments. By the end of his first month in office, McCone had developed a management plan under which the DCI would provide overall direction of the Agency and represent the president on USIB, while the DDCI would supervise CIA's activities and speak for it at USIB meetings.

To afford himself maximum influence within the community, McCone asked for and received a statement from President Kennedy spelling out the DCI's responsibilities and functions.³ Issued on 16 January 1962 over the president's signature, the document stated that the DCI was "the Government's principal intelligence officer" charged with leading the total US foreign intelligence effort with advice and assistance from USIB. Although the letter gave the DCI little authority beyond the terms of Dwight Eisenhower's memorandum to Allen Dulles in August 1957 and NSCID No. 1 of September 1958, McCone attached great significance to it. He considered it an unequivocal directive that placed the DCI on a par with the secretaries of state and

¹ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 192; ~~(S)~~

² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy," 29 November 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; White diary notes for 1 December 1961; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy, 27 December 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy; Information Policy; United Nations; Scientific Matters*, 195; [Clark Clifford?], "Memorandum on Central Intelligence Agency," c. November-December 1961, *ibid.*; McCone memorandum to McGeorge Bundy, "Redefining the Role of the Director of Central Intelligence and Strengthening the Internal Organization of the Central Intelligence Agency," 11 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 30, folder 5; Elder, "John McCone as DCI (1973)," 96-100 ~~(S)~~

³ Sources used in this discussion of the presidential statement were: John F. Kennedy untitled memorandum to McCone, 16 January 1962, Dwight Eisenhower memorandum to NSC members and Allen Dulles, "Recommendations Nos. 1 and 10 of the Report to the President by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities," 5 August 1957, and NSCID No. 1, "Basic Duties and Responsibilities," in Michael Warner, ed., *Central Intelligence: Origin and Evolution*, 50, 55-60, 67-68; Dulles memorandum to James B. Lay (NSC Executive Secretary), "Seventh Report to the President by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, dated October 4, 1960...", 24 December 1960, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 2; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 4, entry for 18 December 1961; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 82; Kirkpatrick, 237-40; McCone memorandum about discussion with President Kennedy, 7 January 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 198-99; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy, 11 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 3-4; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 5. ~~(S)~~

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defense and assured that he would not be relegated to the status of subcabinet assistant for intelligence. The memorandum, he believed, represented a sharp break from Dulles's sense that the DCI's "authority for coordination is a recommending one and not a mandate" and almost was tantamount to a new charter. For that reason, he had it entered into the record of his confirmation hearings. ~~18~~

The letter's language, crafted by Lyman Kirkpatrick and Lawrence Houston (the general counsel), survived largely intact through coordination with the secretaries of defense and state, the attorney general, the president's national security adviser, and the director of the Bureau of the Budget.⁴ Robert McNamara protested the phrase "coordinate and direct" and had it changed to "coordinate and give guidance." Senior Department of State officials George Ball and Roger Hilsman persuaded Dean Rusk to sign a letter laying down several qualifications. "The letter made McCone mad as a hornet," according to Hilsman. "[H]e demanded that it be withdrawn—and the Secretary complied." ~~19~~

In spite of the turf squabbles, McCone got almost all the standing and authority he wanted without evoking fears that he was trying to become an intelligence "czar." He did not formally have the Cabinet rank he held as chairman of the AEC, but he behaved as if he did. He successfully argued for having the salaries of the DCI and DDCI raised to the levels of Cabinet secretary and deputy or under secretary, respectively, as a measure of the positions' equal status. The author of a respected history of CIA has asserted that "[w]hat Allen Dulles had achieved by personal stature and connections, McCone institutionalized for the [A]gency," but McCone's own characterization of the presidential memorandum probably is more accurate: "it confirmed the authority that Allen Dulles had by statute but really never exercised."⁵ ~~20~~

In addition to the presidential statement, McCone's "marching orders" as DCI came in the form of the NSCIDs the National Security Council periodically issued. NSCID

No. 1 (New Series), disseminated on 18 January 1961 and revised on 4 March 1964, set forth the DCI's general responsibilities for coordinating the US foreign intelligence effort. They included chairing USIB; implementing NSCIDs by issuing Director of Central Intelligence Directives (DCIDs); with USIB, producing "national intelligence"; and protecting sources and methods. NSCID No. 1 also made clear to community departments that they had responsibilities for assisting the DCI in his interagency tasks.⁶ (U)

DCID No. 1/3 (August 1963) proved to be the most important directive McCone signed under the authorities granted him in NSCID No. 1. Revised annually, it dealt with "priority national intelligence objectives" deemed likely to persist for at least five years, such as Soviet, Communist Chinese, and Cuban intentions and capabilities; nuclear proliferation; and stability in Warsaw Pact and key non-aligned countries. Other important DCIDs McCone issued set up controls on dissemination and use of intelligence materials; revised the duties of the USIB SIGINT Committee to evaluate and periodically report on COMINT and ELINT collection programs; and spelled out responsibilities and procedures for handling "critical intelligence" (defined as "information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation which affects the security or interests of the United States to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the president").⁷ ~~21~~

The Kirkpatrick Working Group did an informal time study of McCone's schedule in early 1962 and found that he spent 80 percent of his working hours dealing with broad community matters and 20 percent on subjects specific to CIA. McCone made it clear that he wanted this pattern to continue. He directed that his morning staff meeting would focus on "intergovernmental" topics and not internal Agency affairs, which were the province of the Executive Committee. In subsequent months, McCone's community leadership role expanded as he got more involved in

⁴ McCone told Kirkpatrick and Houston what he wanted the letter from the president to say in concept, and then had them draft the particulars. Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 5. ~~22~~

⁵ Ranelagh, 412; transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. ~~23~~

⁶ NSCID No. 1, "Basic Duties and Responsibilities," 18 January 1961, revised 4 March 1964, *Central Intelligence: Origin and Evolution*, 61–66, 69–74. The "national intelligence" for which McCone as DCI was directly responsible was defined in NSCID No. 1 as "that intelligence which is required for the formulation of national security policy, concerns more than one department or agency, and transcends the exclusive competence of a single department or agency." The 1961 NSCID dropped four words from the 1958 version, and the 1964 revisions were minor, adding the Defense Intelligence Agency and removing the military services' intelligence shops from the list of USIB members. (U)

⁷ DCID No. 1/3, "Priority National Intelligence Objectives," 14 August 1963, revised 23 December 1964; DCID No. 1/7 (New Series), "Controls for Dissemination and Use of Intelligence and Intelligence Information," 21 February 1962; DCID No. 6/1 (New Series), "SIGINT Committee," 31 May 1962; and DCID No. 7/1 (New Series), "Handling of Critical Intelligence," 7 December 1961, revised 25 July 1963, ICS Files, Job 91B01063R, box 1, folders 14 and 15. ~~24~~

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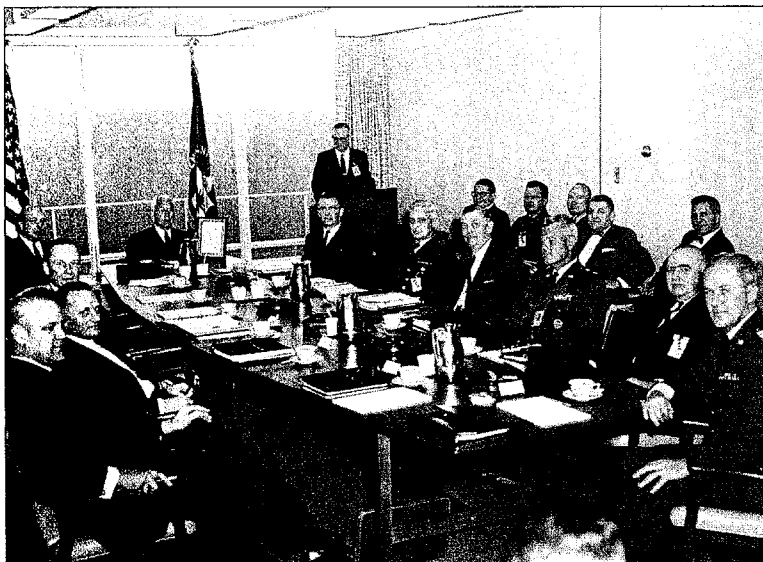
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interagency intelligence matters, Vietnam and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), in particular. By FY 1964, about halfway through his tenure, McCone had direct or nominal coordinating authority over the activities of nearly

USIB Resurgent (U)

Because McCone had command authority only over CIA's relatively small portion of the Intelligence Community's resources—about one ninth of the total—his power as DCI depended in large measure on his ability to gain support from other community agencies. USIB was McCone's principal bureaucratic mechanism for accomplishing that. More dedicated to USIB than Dulles had been, he especially wanted to improve its administration and to enlarge its role in broad community reviews and appraisals of intelligence problems, collection methods and procedures, and counterintelligence and security developments. During USIB meetings McCone often was the most informed and vigorous advocate of carefully managing resources. When necessary, he cited the views of the White House to support his positions. As a corporate board chairman and head of the AEC, he had developed the political skills required to work through a committee structure to get tasks accomplished.⁹

Organizationally, the USIB Secretariat moved from the ODDI to the ODCI, where it functioned as a non-Agency staff, supporting McCone in his community leadership role.



McCone and the US Intelligence Board in January 1963 (U)

In May 1962, James Lay—one of the original officers in CIA's predecessor, the Central Intelligence Group, and later the executive secretary of the NSC under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower—became the executive secretary of USIB. The board met, usually every Wednesday, first at the South Building in the E Street complex and then at Headquarters, and typically issued more than a dozen actions each week. (During the Cuban missile crisis, McCone convened USIB every morning at the East Building before he went to the White House.) Immediately before these sessions, McCone

met with Carter and other CIA officers to thresh out the Agency position on agenda items, including its key judgments on estimates. McCone prepared for all the board's meetings meticulously and ran them efficiently, always trying to steer the participants to closure on agenda items. He did not, however, want estimates "watered down to get everyone on board," as he put it. He retained the practice of having

departments use footnotes to express divergent views, as long as "intellectual discipline and restraint" were exercised, "lest the finished product become merely a collection of conflicting opinions rather than a responsible judgment." Only rarely did he have to exercise his chairman's fiat to establish a bottom line.¹⁰

McCone encountered strong resistance from the Department of Defense when he moved to reduce USIB's military membership. Acting largely on the recommendation of the Eisenhower administration's Joint Study Group on Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States, McCone

⁸ Kirkpatrick, 240; DCI morning meeting minutes for 22 January 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; John Bross (National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff) memorandum to McCone, "Funding of Intelligence Community Programs," 4 February 1965, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 129; "Minutes of PFIAB Meeting on January 30, 1964," PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10002, PFIAB Records, NARA.

⁹ James B. Lay, "The United States Intelligence Board, 1958-1965," History Staff unpublished manuscript No. MISC-2, 6 vols. (1974), vol. 3, 70, vol. 6, 274-75. The background and establishment of USIB is discussed in Jackson, "Dulles as DCI," vol. 2, chap. 3.

¹⁰ Lay, vol. 3, 78, 86, 142; Kirkpatrick, 217; Elder, "Support for McCone," 18; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Early Warning in National Intelligence," 30 April 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-419, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 14.

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proposed that the board's membership be reduced from 10 to five: the DCI (as chairman) and representatives of CIA (the DDCI), the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the JCS, with ad hoc representation from the FBI and the AEC. The military services and NSA would lose their seats. Secretary of Defense McNamara countered with a proposal whereby NSA would keep its place and the new Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) (created in October 1961; see below) would join as representative of both the secretary of defense and the Joint Chiefs. All this chair-swapping proceeded slowly, however, mainly because of opposition from the JCS and the slow startup of DIA. The services were not dropped from membership until March 1964, and they retained the right to send observers and register dissents during coordination discussions and in finished estimates. The Joint Chiefs withdrew at the same time, leaving DIA and NSA as spokesmen for the Department of Defense. Besides the DCI and DDCI, USIB's civilian members were the Department of State's director of intelligence and research and officers from the AEC and the FBI. McCone disapproved of the large number of community personnel who claimed a need to attend USIB meetings to explain or defend their positions, but he decided that overcoming this bureaucratic mindset was not worth the trouble and allowed the backbenchers and briefcase carriers to stay.¹¹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone thought USIB's committee structure was oversized, cumbersome, and ineffective, and he worked to streamline it. When he became DCI, the board had 20 standing and four ad hoc committees. In mid-1962, after a review by the DCI's Coordination Staff (see below), USIB abolished nine of them, retaining those dealing with topics of growing policymaker interest or increased relevance to the board's changing focus. They included committees on security, SIGINT, scientific intelligence, atomic energy, overhead reconnaissance, guided missiles and astronautics, HUMINT, and defectors.¹² ~~SECRET~~

McCone was especially interested in seeing USIB address administrative issues related to program management, budgeting, and long-range planning. In particular, he wanted to centralize decisionmaking, encourage efficiency, and avoid redundancy of effort. He sought to strike a balance between rapidly expanding intelligence requirements and the rising costs in manpower and resources needed to satisfy them. The problem he confronted had many facets: intelligence targets were increasing in number, size, and complexity; collection technologies were becoming more expensive and drawing funds from other intelligence activities; intelligence agencies had to compete with other federal departments for money; and inflation was diminishing purchasing power. In this area, unlike in others, McCone got the cooperation of Secretary of Defense McNamara, who at the Pentagon was implementing coordinated management systems he had brought in from the corporate world. In this aspect of USIB's work, McCone and McNamara shared objectives. Over the next three years, they transferred a considerable amount of routine intelligence decisionmaking from separate (and often competing) agencies to USIB and its committees.¹³ ~~SECRET~~

A Community Coordination Staff (U)

McCone inherited a unit called the DCI Coordination Staff that was created in 1960 to help the DCI and USIB implement the administrative recommendations of the Joint Study Group on Foreign Intelligence Activities.¹⁴ The staff's members were picked during Dulles's tenure, and McCone did not consider them or their mission to be consistent with his own ideas about community management. At first, he considered creating a new position of Deputy for Coordination with a stature equivalent to the deputy directors and subordinate only to him and the DDCI. The incumbent would help the DCI carry out his community guidance responsibilities under NSCID No. 1. McCone enlisted the help of Gordon Gray, Eisenhower's last national security adviser, in finding a person for the job and establishing its responsibilities. The idea did not move forward amid all the

¹¹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara and Mr. Gilpatric..." 5 December 1961, and "Memorandum of Discussion with the Joint Chiefs..." 9 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board," 7 January 1962, McCone memorandum of discussion with the JCS, 8 January 1962, and McCone memorandum to President Johnson, "Proposed Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board," 21 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXV, Organization of Foreign Policy...*, 197-98, 200, 222-23; McCone memorandum to President Kennedy, "Functions and Composition of the United States Intelligence Board," 11 December 1961, Bundy untitled memorandum to McCone, 5 February 1964, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Reorganization of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB)," 3 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 6, folder 17; Lay memorandum, "Reorganization of USIB," 16 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 433-34; Lay, vol. 5, 5-10; Elder, "Support for McCone," 17-18. ~~SECRET~~

¹² Lay, vol. 4, 180 et seq., vol. 6, 279-80; "Committee and Working Group Structure of the United States Intelligence Board as of 26 September 1960" and "USIB Committees Dissolved, 1961-," DDI Files, Job 82R00129R, box 3, folder 30; C.P. Cabell (DDCI) memorandum to Timothy J. Reardon (presidential aide), "Interdepartmental Committees and Task Forces," 1 December 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 8, folder 7. ~~SECRET~~

¹³ Lay, vol. 4, 161 et seq., vol. 6, 217. ~~SECRET~~

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~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)*

other administrative changes McCone made during his first year and a half, and he relied instead on the USIB apparatus and his dealings with the heads of community agencies. By mid-1963, however, he decided that those instruments still did not enable him to oversee the national intelligence process as effectively as he wanted. He concluded that he needed an office responsible to him to evaluate intelligence programs and projects objectively. ~~15~~

After discussing the idea with the White House, Congress, and the Departments of Defense and State, in September 1963 McCone set up the National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff (NIPE)—one of the most distinctive examples of his use of bureaucracy as a management tool. Centralized program evaluation would help him assert his coordinating authority over the community. He chose John Bross to head NIPE, drawing on the experience of the former operations officer and comptroller in planning, budgeting, and negotiating with community members. Bross led a staff of over a dozen intelligence professionals from several USIB departments. His deputy was Thomas Parrott, an Agency veteran then serving as CIA representative to the president's national security adviser. ~~15~~

McCone gave NIPE a general brief to appraise the cost effectiveness of programs, systems, and technologies used to meet national intelligence requirements. Those assessments became the basis for his consultations with the heads of community departments. McCone also wanted NIPE to evaluate how well USIB committees were implementing the Priority National Intelligence Objectives that the board regularly established. NIPE conducted the first-ever com-

prehensive inventory of community intelligence activities to find out who was doing what; to identify gaps, overlaps, and jurisdictional conflicts; and to ascertain how effectively different agencies were using resources and meeting objectives. ~~16~~



John Bross (U)

Bross and his staff also performed several tasks that promoted McCone's goal of integrating national intelligence efforts under the supervision of the DCI—among them liaison with PFIAB, negotiations with the Bureau of the Budget, an examination of the usefulness of the Department of State's INR, dealings with the Department of Defense on SIGINT and imagery collection, and special studies of COMINT programs, paramilitary projects, and clandestine activities in the Middle East. DDCI Carter's aide-de-camp, E. Henry ("Hank") Knoche, later said that McCone tended to use Bross "as a lightning rod. If McCone didn't want to go bell the cat, he'd send Bross to do it." McCone's establishment of NIPE set in motion further achievements in interagency coordination under his successors, but major impediments persisted, including inconsistent or nonexistent procedures in other departments, continued resistance to cooperation by community members, and the magnitude of the task compared to the resources accorded to NIPE. ~~17~~

¹⁴ The basic source for this section is John Bross and [redacted] "The National Intelligence Programs Evaluation Staff from Its Establishment, September 9, 1963 until December 31, 1970," History Staff unpublished manuscript No. MISC-11 (1971). See also "The Coordination Staff of the Director of Central Intelligence," 3 January 1962, and "Briefing for the Director, 19 February 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 128; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...with Dr. Killian...," 1 August 1962, McCone untitled memorandum to the secretaries of state and defense, the attorney general, and the chairman of the AEC, 4 September 1963, and Bross memoranda to McCone, "CIA Activity Inventory and Community-wide program Analysis," 9 July 1963, and "Possible Approach to Improved Coordination and Management of the Intelligence Community Through Programs Evaluation," 20 August 1963, *ibid.*, folder 122; McCone letter to [redacted] 23 August 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 204-5; Lay, vol. 4, 178-79; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 4-5, 25; Carter-Knoche OH, 20-21. ~~17~~

¹⁵ After NIPE was established, the DCI Coordination Staff finished its current projects and was disbanded in 1964. ~~17~~

¹⁶ McCone untitled memorandum to the secretaries of state and defense, the attorney general, and the chairman of the AEC, 4 September 1963, and Bross memorandum to McCone, "Terms of Reference and Proposed Activities of the NIPE Staff," 20 November 1963, and "Actions Taken to Improve Effectiveness of Intelligence Effort of the Government as a Whole," 15 April 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122. Former Agency officer [redacted] in his study of DCI's relations with the community, has drawn an apt parallel between McCone's creation of NIPE and Walter Bedell Smith's establishment of DIVE in 1950. BNE was the vehicle by which Smith and subsequent DCIs exercised *substantive* leadership over the production of national intelligence for the president and other NSC members; and NIPE became the means by which McCone and his successors until 1970 exercised *management-related* leadership over the US government's foreign intelligence effort. [redacted] "Evolution of the DCI's 'Coordination' Role from the 1940s to the 1960s," 8, introduction to "DCI Leadership of the Intelligence Community in the 1970s," draft manuscript, copy in author's possession. ~~17~~

¹⁷ Bross memorandum, "Various Assignments to NIPE from the DCI," 31 October 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 146; Lay, vol. 6, 219; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 5; Carter-Knoche OH, 20; Anna Karalekas, "History of the Central Intelligence Agency," in William M. Leary, ed., *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, 88. ~~17~~

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CHAPTER 3

Jousting With Rival Fiefdoms (U)

The Intelligence Community, journalist Stewart Alsop and former Agency officer Thomas Braden wrote in 1964, "is not...noted for brotherly love and happy fellowship. Intelligence is knowledge. Knowledge is power. Power is the most valuable commodity in government. Intelligence has therefore traditionally been a peculiarly feud-ridden business."¹⁸ In the course of augmenting his authority as DCI, McCone proved the accuracy of that conclusion by clashing continually with community members who sought to protect their prerogatives and interests from his intrusions. McCone faced the most stubborn resistance from the two community departments with the largest intelligence responsibilities and the most combative directors: the Department of Defense under Robert McNamara and the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover. USIB was the most important bureaucratic lever McCone had for exerting force on these agencies. On occasion, he also invoked the power of the White House and, in rare instances, congressional allies to try to get what he wanted. His dealings with the Department of State, in contrast, were much more cordial because he had a collegial working relationship with Secretary of State Rusk and did not threaten the department's small intelligence domain. (U)

The Department of Defense (U)

A fundamental imbalance of authority and resources dominated McCone's interaction with the military components of the Intelligence Community. Although as DCI he was charged with coordinating all national intelligence activities, he had command authority as D/CIA over only [] percent of the community's budget and personnel. His reach inside the Department of Defense was restricted to strategic intelligence; he had no statutory authority over tactical intelligence. []

[] Even with USIB and NIPE, McCone was unable to consolidate the different intelligence resource packages—the Consolidated Cryptologic Program (the SIGINT community), the Consolidated Intelligence Program (the DIA and the military services), the National Reconnaissance Program (satellites), and CIA's clandestine program—because three of them were principally or exclusively military. Consequently, the DCI heard little or nothing about many incremental, yet substantial, changes made within the programs between annual budget reviews.¹⁹ ~~X~~

Some of McCone's difficulties with the Department of Defense can be attributed to his often tense relations with Robert McNamara. "They were fundamentally competitive in nature," Lyman Kirkpatrick remarked, "very strong-minded men and very able men and very aggressive men"—traits that amplified their differences over policy and administrative issues such as Vietnam, CIA's role in counterinsurgency operations, NRO, and the follow-up to the Cuban missile crisis (all topics detailed in later chapters). While McCone was trying to secure his authority over the community, he had to fight off McNamara's attempts to expand the Pentagon's intelligence role. At a time when some finesse may have been called for, the DCI's assumption of bureaucratic parity and blunt managerial suggestions rankled McNamara—"the star and the strong man among the newcomers to the Kennedy team," in presidential speechwriter Theodore Sorensen's words—who advised the president almost daily on a wide range of national security subjects and prided himself on his own expertise at administering large organizations. After seeing a letter the DCI wrote to McNamara urging an overhaul of defense planning, a CIA officer characterized its tone as "typically McCone" and paraphrased its content: "I know of your concern that the Defense Department is running a lot of useless, sloppy, irrelevant, redundant intelligence programs and I think you ought to address yourself to this problem."²⁰ ~~X~~

¹⁸ Alsop and Braden, 243. (U)

¹⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...DCI Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 7 December 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Bross memorandum to McCone, "Intelligence Community Matters of Possible Interest for Discussion with the Secretary of Defense," 13 December 1963, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 128; CIA budget documents for 1952-64 in Office of Finance and Logistics Files, Job 80-01240A, box 4, folder 6; Carter memorandum to McCone concerning NPIC, 3 January 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 2; Bross and [] "The NIPE Staff," 71-72, 92-93.

²⁰ Kirkpatrick, [] OH, 27; McCone letter to McNamara, 10 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 7; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 160. On John Kennedy's high regard for McNamara, see Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 269-70 ("In eleven years with Kennedy I never saw him develop admiration and personal regard for another man as quickly"); and Deborah Shapley, *Promise and Power*, 270 ("Bobby Kennedy later said his brother thought 'most highly' of McNamara, 'more than any other cabinet member'"). On McNamara as Pentagon administrator, see *ibid.*, 236-38, and Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 312-19. ~~X~~

~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)*

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the JCS (U)

McNamara, already burdened with many sensitive and time-consuming issues besides intelligence, bridled at McCone's efforts to assume more authority over the military's collection and analysis components, and the DCI had little success at persuading the secretary of defense to use him as an ally on matters of mutual concern. McNamara, McCone wrote in July 1962,

is not particularly interested in DCI assistance on his internal problems and (although he did not express it) obviously feels that the DCI role should be confined to the interface between the Defense intelligence community and the balance of the national intelligence community. In this respect I feel that SecDef's views differ sharply from those of the President, the BOB [Bureau of the Budget] and the Killian Board [PFIAB].

McCone periodically suggested that a new position of assistant secretary of defense for intelligence be created to centralize the Pentagon's authority over military intelligence activities, but the idea did not appeal to McNamara, who thought DIA performed that function adequately. Nor did the secretary of defense back integration of the four intelligence resource programs mentioned above, and McCone lacked the authority to

decree their consolidation. Until July 1963, McNamara resisted giving the DCI full access to the complete intelligence budgets of all Pentagon components.²¹ ~~SECRET~~

Their differences over large issues encompassed McNamara's unauthorized (by McCone) use of imagery in a press conference to prove that the administration was closely watching the Soviet military withdrawal from Cuba after the missile crisis—"McCone was furious about that," Robert Kennedy said later, "because they were using stuff from the CIA"—and extended to minor matters such as the rank of the military representative to NIPE. McCone wanted a three-star officer who would bring some clout and independence to the position, but McNamara thought a two-star would do. They compromised; a major general would go, but McCone would select him.²² (U)

McCone had varying relations with the other senior civilian officials at the Department of Defense. He remained friends with Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary from 1961 to 1964, despite some bureaucratic tangles. His mostly amicable but purely professional dealings with Gilpatric's successor, Cyrus Vance, were marred by the increasingly contentious dispute over satellite reconnaissance. McCone never got along with the two Pentagon principals in that controversy, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Eugene Fubini, and Under Secretary of the Air Force and Director of NRO Brockway McMillan. McCone worked satisfactorily with the uniformed leadership except for the Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Curtis LeMay, whom he believed was trying to push CIA out of the satellite program. (The "sky spies" wrangle is detailed in Chapter 9.) (U)

The Defense Intelligence Agency (U)

DIA came into existence on 1 October 1961 to bring, in McNamara's optimistic words, "more effective management of all Department of Defense intelligence activities, and the elimination of duplicating intelligence facilities, organization, and tasks," but it encountered resistance from the service branches and other entrenched interests at the Pentagon. Moreover, the new organization "was a creature of compromise from the outset," in the words of the Church Committee, and did not start off with much bureaucratic

²¹ Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 6; McCone, "Summary of Meeting with Secretary McNamara and Secretary Gilpatric, General Carter and Mr. McCone on 5 July 1962." McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara...", 12 July 1963, *ibid.*, folder 7; Bross and ²² "The NIPE Staff," 71-71, 92-93, 96-97. (S)

²² Robert F. Kennedy oral history at the JFK Library, quoted in Shapley, 182; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 347 n. 3. (U)

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clout. "DIA was born old," one official recalled. "McNamara just gathered the drones and put them all in one building."²³ (U)

McCone had to contend with the conflicts between CIA and DIA that arose as the new organization staked out its areas of responsibility and competence. His view of DIA differed from his predecessor's. Allen Dulles had feared that the proposed DIA would control the Agency's access to raw military intelligence and leave CIA officers dependent on DIA judgments. More generally, he wrote in *The Craft of Intelligence*, "[t]here is...always the possibility that two such powerful and well-financed agencies as DIA and CIA will become rivals and competitors. Some of this could be healthy; too much of it could be both expensive and dangerous." McCone, in contrast, did not see why in theory the two organizations should not get along because, to him, they had different missions and customers. He regarded DIA as a departmental, not a national, intelligence asset; it comprised, he said, "the intelligence resources of the JCS in the same way that G-2 is the intelligence resource of the Chief of Staff of the Army." McCone conceded that some turf battles and duplication of effort were inevitable as DIA built up staffs of political and economic analysts. He was wary of what he saw as McNamara's goal of constructing "a fully integrated intelligence organization under his own control, so that he will not be dependent in any degree on CIA or other intelligence organizations." Moreover, McCone knew of some DIA officers' deep feelings of suspicion toward CIA, especially the DDP.²⁴ ~~(S)~~

At the interagency working level, however, significant operational difficulties did not develop. DDP Richard Helms reported in late 1964 that DIA "has exerted an effective influence in the resolution of a number of community problems." McCone's good relations with DIA's top manag-

ers, Gen. Joseph F. Carroll and Adm. Rufus Taylor, helped bring that about, as did DIA's need to lean on the authority of the DCI to solidify its own position in the community. Meanwhile, the Agency, which had assumed some military intelligence functions by default—especially analysis of Soviet defense spending—continued some of them as a service of common concern to the community.²⁵ ~~(S)~~

By early 1963, McCone had worked with senior Pentagon officials to resolve three administrative points of issue between CIA and DIA. First, a joint analysis group, chaired by a senior CIA analyst, would examine the Soviet and Communist Chinese military threat in an effort to prevent competing assessments from developing along civilian-military or national-departmental lines. Second, instead of creating its own imagery interpretation center, DIA would detail a large number of its officers to NPIC to support military requirements. Third, DIA would continue producing its own daily

~~(S)~~ while CIA would provide national intelligence to the community through the *Current Intelligence Bulletin*. This compromise arose from CIA managers' concern that policymakers would be confused if both agencies reported the same intelligence but reached different judgments about its meaning. DIA's daily publication proved a less tractable problem, probably because it was the Pentagon's main way to compete with CIA analysis. In 1964, McCone had to address

~~(S)~~ to prevent the printing of raw Agency traffic without clearance and the commission of "numerous [other] examples of slipshod work." An interagency working group agreed to limit dissemination of both publications, and CIA began reserving more sensitive material for its White House-only products.²⁶ ~~(S)~~

²³ On DIA's origins, see Deane Allen, "The Defense Intelligence Agency: The First 25 Years," *American Intelligence Journal* 8, no. 1 (January 1987): 4–6; "DIA—A Brief History—35 Years," on DIA Web site at www.dia.ic.gov/admin/historian/35yrs-history; Patrick Mescall, "The Birth of the Defense Intelligence Agency," in Jeffreys-Jones and Lownie, 158–201; idem, "A Creature of Compromise: The Establishment of the DIA," *IJIC* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1994): 251–74; Elizabeth Jeszenszky, "The Defense Intelligence Agency: Jointness is Goodness," *American Intelligence Journal* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 79–83; US Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (hereafter Church Committee), 94th Congress, 1st sess., 7 vols., vol. 1, 349–54 (quote on 350); and David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government*, chap. 15. Lyman Kirkpatrick, chairman of the Joint Study Group on the Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States that in 1960 recommended centralizing and streamlining military intelligence, was dubbed "father of DIA"—an appellation he later termed "flattering in some respects" but "not an unmixed blessing." Kirkpatrick, 225. (U)

²⁴ Allen W. Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, 47; transcript of McCone interview with Stewart Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with Eugene Fubini, 16 November 1964, ~~(S)~~

²⁵ Helms memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Response to your Action Memorandum No. A-437," 4 December 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 6; ~~(S)~~ 193; Noel E. Firth and James H. Noren, *Soviet Defense Spending: A History of CIA Estimates, 1950–1990*, 37–38. On Carroll's appointment, see "Intelligence Job Given to General," *New York Times*, 13 August 1961, DIA clipping file, HIC. Taylor served as DDCI under Richard Helms from 1966 to 1969. ~~(S)~~

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~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)***The National Security Agency (U)**

NSA, the largest entity in the Intelligence Community, remained mostly outside McCone's grasp even though an internal management study in 1961 determined that it needed the same kind of firm direction that McCone would soon apply to CIA. NSA, that report concluded, had "no effective mechanism...to exercise the strong centralized control of national policy, planning, and programming functions, which appears essential to insure concentration on and responsiveness to the Director's national responsibilities." Nonetheless, NSA resisted McNamara's moves toward consolidation at the Department of Defense, viewed CIA and DIA warily, and rejected the notion that the DCI should spend more time coordinating both civilian and military intelligence efforts.²⁷ ~~XX~~

Already feeling beleaguered when McCone arrived on the scene, NSA got a short reprieve as the new DCI confined his early dealings with it to formal contacts in USIB. McCone's technical interests and coordination objectives, however, soon led him to seek ways to exert authority over NSA. In 1962, he combined USIB's COMINT and ELINT committees into a single SIGINT committee and chose a former director of NSA (DIRNSA), Lt. Gen. John Samford, to head it. Samford agreed with McCone that the secretary of defense, essentially a department head, should have less authority over NSA, which had extensive responsibilities in national intelligence and thus should fall more under the DCI's purview. By modernizing an antiquated SIGINT requirements system, Samford's committee gave USIB—and McCone—more influence over NSA's day-to-day operations. Unlike most other USIB committees, the SIGINT committee served more to convey policy guidance to NSA than to provide a forum for discussion within USIB.²⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone also was partly responsible for the dismissal of a DIRNSA, Adm. Laurence H. Frost, in June 1962.²⁹ Frost's diffidence (at USIB meetings he was scarcely audible) had not set well with McCone or McNamara; the two may also have been dissatisfied with Frost's efforts to rectify problems identified in the above-mentioned management study in 1961; the embarrassing defection to Moscow of two NSA officers working for the Soviets had occurred on his watch; PFIAB chairman James Killian thought Frost was too parochial; and he resisted relinquishing NSA's control of its SIGINT satellites to the NRO, which would respond only to requirements from USIB. Replacing Frost was Air Force Lt. Gen. Gordon Blake. In experience, Blake seemed suitable—he had run NSA's air branch, the Air Force Security Service, for two years and headed large commands in the Pacific and the continental United States—but he did not want to be DIRNSA, and he disagreed with McCone and McNamara that community SIGINT programs needed consolidation.
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Notwithstanding Blake's limitations, McCone used the leadership transition as an opportunity to move ahead, particularly after DDCI Carter, his liaison with the military intelligence services, advised him of several serious deficiencies at Ft. Meade. "[T]he NSA staff is overstuffed with a bureaucratic hierarchy consisting of many cliques worrying about their prerogatives rather than doing their jobs," Carter reported. "NSA is too busy attempting to analyze their information...rather than getting the facts out"; "NSA is not really geared up...to do a proper job on their ELINT activity...they need a lot of help in this area"; and, perhaps most damningly for a DCI with McCone's community-wide perspective and policymaking role, "they are oriented too much toward military requirements and not enough toward the diplomatic and cold war aspects of their

²⁷ Thomas R. Johnson, *American Cryptology during the Cold War, 1945–1989. Book II: Centralization Wins, 1960–1972*, 292–94. ~~XX~~

²⁸ Johnson, *American Cryptology*, 340–41; ~~XX~~ "The History of SIGINT in the Central Intelligence Agency, 1947–70," DCI Historical Series No. DCI-4, 4 vols. (October 1971), vol. 3, 118–22; Samford memorandum to McCone, "Recommendations of President's Board of Consultants re NSA," 18 July 1962, HS Files, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 33. ~~XX~~

²⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Johnson, *American Cryptology*, 340–41; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 113–14; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...26 June 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Carter untitled memorandum to McCone, 26 May and 7 July 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 5; Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 99–100; idem, *Body of Secrets*, 96–97; "Biography: United States Air Force: Lieutenant General Gordon A. Blake," on US Air Force Web site at www.af.mil/news/biographies/blake; McCone letter to James Killian, 17 August 1962, CMS Files, 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; Dwayne A. Day, "Ferrets Above: American Signals Intelligence Satellites During the 1960s," *IJIC* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 452. ~~XX~~

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task." McCone was gratified that Blake had fine interpersonal skills, which made the DCI's job easier. After a luncheon discussion in August 1962, the DCI informed PFIAB that he was "very impressed and pleased with [Blake's] approach to NSA problems" and "also pleased with his contribution to the United States Intelligence Board."³⁰

Once Blake took office, McCone's interactions with NSA would be mainly bureaucratic and conducted through USIB. He visited Fort Meade only twice, both times in 1962—on a get-acquainted tour soon after becoming DCI, and a few months later to attend a welcoming reception for Blake—and he had little direct contact with the longtime deputy director of NSA, Louis Tordella, who served as "The Fort's" liaison to Langley. The Agency officials who regularly worked closest with NSA were Huntington Sheldon, the head SIGINT officer; DDS&T Albert Wheelon; the ELINT officers in the DS&T; and the chiefs of Foreign Intelligence/Division D in the DDP. From these subordinates, and through his own channels, by the end of 1963, McCone had developed an "intuitive feel" that NSA was behind the times. He believed it was failing to adapt organizationally and technologically to new concepts of warfare—the "people's wars" breaking out in the Third World—and to harder cryptanalytic targets. He lacked the authority and political influence, however, to reorient NSA toward those new realities.³⁰



J. Edgar Hoover (U)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (U)

McCone's work with the FBI was confined to high-level counterintelligence cases, such as the Golitsyn and Nosenko defections, and to setting the boundaries of the investigation of John F. Kennedy's assassination (see Chapters 13 and 14). The Counterintelligence (CI) Staff—particularly James Angleton and [redacted]

[redacted] had, since 1955, handled routine interagency matters and less promi-

nent counterintelligence cases with the FBI's liaison to Langley since 1952, Sam Papich, and with FBI Assistant Director Alan Belmont. Richard Helms kept McCone apprised of significant counterintelligence matters, and the DCI himself saw Papich or senior Bureau officials (such as William Sullivan and William Branigan, chiefs of the Intelligence Division and the Soviet counterintelligence unit, respectively) over a dozen times. McCone got along well with them, although they caused his potent temper to flare at least twice. He got into what Belmont called a "heated exchange" when the FBI preempted an Agency counterintelligence initiative against the Soviets by reporting it, with a decidedly negative cast, to PFIAB. Later, when Papich suggested that McCone had withheld intelligence about the Kennedy assassination from the Bureau, the DCI became "very visibly incensed and left the impression that he might at any moment ask me to leave."³¹

The cooperation between CIA and FBI deputies contrasted with the tension between their forceful directors, who did not care for each other personally and did not get along well professionally. According to Papich, "By the early sixties, Mr. Hoover had developed a respect for [Allen] Dulles. They didn't like each other necessarily, but each knew what to expect." McCone, however—who as AEC chairman had had some dealings with the Bureau on Soviet espionage—did not try to ingratiate himself with Hoover as Dulles had. Instead, he adopted his characteristic all-business attitude and was not reluctant to assert Agency prerogatives over counterintelligence and to insist that domestic security could not be divorced from foreign intelligence when another country was involved. "No question, McCone was *tough*," Papich recalled. "He probably would have liked to toss Hoover into the Potomac." Hoover, in turn, suspected that all DCIs, and particularly the aggressive McCone, wanted to trespass on Bureau territory. On the day McCone became DCI, Hoover told a deputy that "[t]his constant harping [by Papich and other Bureau officials] upon the sensitivities of CIA is getting irksome." Over two years later, when told that McCone had inquired about his health and was informed it was excellent, Hoover jibed, "That news probably didn't please him."³² (U)

³⁰ McCone calendars; [redacted] "SIGINT in the CIA," vol. 3, 128–29; Parrott memorandum, "Meeting with DCI—9 December 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 146.

³¹ McCone calendars; Elder memorandum to William Colby (DCI), "Special Activities," 1 June 1973, "Family Jewels" compendium, 458–59, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, boxes 16–17, folders 343–45; D.J. Brennan Jr. memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Relations with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 23 December 1963, William K. Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-4186.

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~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)*

An index of the nature of the two directors' relationship is the character and infrequency of their contacts. They met only five times during McCone's 42 months as DCI, and always at the Department of Justice, as Hoover refused to come to Langley. Moreover, according to Helms, liaison with the FBI was "always a one-way street," with Bureau officials regularly asking for, but rarely providing, information and assistance. Helms once told a congressional committee (speaking metaphorically, not geographically) that "Mr. Hoover always 'liaised' on the other fellow's playing field.... Nobody 'liaised' down on his playing field." On another occasion, Helms remarked that "the Agency and the Bureau did not have what you would call connubial relations.... [T]here was nothing we could do in the Agency to make Mr. Hoover happy about the fact that he didn't like the Agency in the first place. He didn't like its people, in the second, and as far as he was concerned, it was quite unnecessary." Despite these deep differences, McCone saw no reason to seek White House backing to resolve them; the Kennedys' reluctance to take on Hoover was well known at the time.³³ ~~XX~~

The Department of State (U)

According to McCone, Secretary of State Rusk told him several times that CIA's relations with the Department of State during the early 1960s were the best Rusk could recall since joining the Foreign Service years before. At the start of the Kennedy administration, however, a substantial amount of resentment had built up between the two organizations because their missions conflicted at times, they had different institutional cultures, and they competed for resources and influence. The diplomats functioned largely in the open and often had strong misgivings about the covert action operators and spymasters, whose clandestine activities, if mishandled, could cause foreign policy flaps that embassies would have to quell. In addition, the Foreign Service believed that, as of 1961, CIA had so much money and—because the DCI and the secretary of state were brothers—so much pull that it could undertake cloak-and-dagger activities that sometimes seemed to be conducted for their own sake and not to advance a clear-cut policy objective. "The basic trouble

[from the diplomats' perspective]," Roger Hilsman has written, "was that the Agency was simply too powerful for the narrow function for which it was responsible." "It combined in one organization just too many of the resources and instruments of foreign policy...." Many Clandestine Services officers, in turn, regarded the diplomats as high-living showboaters who took credit for the successes achieved by the secret operatives' dangerous labors in the shadows. DDP veterans thought of themselves as the true area experts who took the real risks, not the ticket-punching partygoers and press release writers from Foggy Bottom.³⁴ (U)

McCone recalled that on day one of his tenure, he encountered remnants of what he termed "a frightful problem between CIA and State" that "grew up from the fact that the Brothers Dulles would work out understandings that would cut across all organizational lines."

[H]ence, when Foster died and [Christian] Herter took over[,] there were two or three years of extreme difficulty...[and] a number of places where serious tensions existed between Station Chiefs and Ambassadors.... I made a point to go around to each one of those places all over the world and to sit down and straighten the situation out.

In most cases, according to McCone, he did not have to deal with operational problems resulting from the Kennedy administration's "Country Team" concept, which explicitly affirmed the ambassadors' full authority over all US government personnel and activities in-country and all communications sent from the embassies—

A CIA chief of station, however, did not have to reveal specific sources and methods—only general information on the types of collection and counterintelligence operations being run—to the ambassador, who for the most part did not want to know anyway unless some political row might occur. On collection activities generally, McCone thought diplomats sometimes were too skittish about possible fallout from espionage operations, and he resisted having political restraints placed on aerial reconnais-

³² Mark Riebling, *Wedge: The Secret War Between the FBI and CIA*, 186, citing interview with Papich; Sullivan memorandum to Belmont, "Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 29 November 1961, Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-3882; and Brennan memorandum to Sullivan, "Relations with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 23 December 1963, *ibid.*, doc. no. 62-80750-4186. (U)

³³ McCone calendars; author's conversation with Richard Helms, 28 May 1998;

Helms comments at CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence conference on "Origins and Development of the CIA," March 1994, transcript on file in the History Staff. ~~XX~~

³⁴ The tensions between CIA and the Department of State at the time McCone became DCI are well described in Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 63–82; quote on 77. (U)

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sance flights. In addition, the DCI questioned whether Agency intelligence reports got the attention they should at the Department of State because they were channeled through INR. "INR is a problem," he observed; "either it is too much of a bottleneck for intelligence going to policymakers or it doesn't have enough stature in the Department."³⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone's contacts with the Department of State's leadership occurred principally on the policy level with Rusk; Under Secretary Ball; Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1961-64) U. Alexis Johnson; and Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs (1961-63) and Under Secretary for Political Affairs (1963-65) W. Averell Harriman. Johnson and Harriman were McCone's referents on covert action and counterinsurgency. On most intelligence matters he worked through USIB with successive directors of INR, Roger Hilsman and Thomas Hughes. After Hilsman succeeded Harriman in 1963, McCone dealt with him on Vietnam. (U)

McCone and Rusk maintained an amicable relationship and did not have serious policy differences except over Vietnam. Rusk, who in 1946 had supported the creation of a central intelligence organization, was one of the administration's staunchest supporters of CIA. He avidly consumed its intelligence products, which he regarded as "exceptionally good," and he did not lose faith in it after the Bay of Pigs, as other administration officials had. Although he thought the Agency had miscalculated badly and did not serve the president well in that instance, overall he attributed the operation's shortcomings to inherent defects in the intelligence process rather than to incompetence, faulty analysis, or misrepresentation by CIA. Rusk had a genteel sense of propriety about espionage and a pragmatic concern that covert action might reap unintended diplomatic consequences.

As secretary of state he vetoed several anti-Castro projects as ill-timed or ill-con-



Dean Rusk (U)

Photo: CORBIS

McCone met informally with Rusk on most Sundays, and their personal and professional rapport showed in other ways as well. In early 1964, Rusk sought to make Agency analyses and community estimates more useful by passing privileged diplomatic communications to McCone so they could be factored into finished intelligence. Late in McCone's directorship, Rusk confided that he was considering resigning because he was tired and financially strapped. McCone suggested that Rusk consider serving as president of the University of California after leaving the administration. Rusk seemed interested, so McCone said he would discuss the idea with the university's trustees when he returned to California.³⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone's relations with other senior officers at Foggy Bottom were professionally respectful but marked by occasional policy differences. McCone and George Ball stood at opposite ends of the "hawk-dove" policy spectrum on Vietnam. U. Alexis Johnson had worked directly with CIA in Southeast Asia in the 1950s and was charged by the White House with strengthening the department's ability to deal with the Agency and the Pentagon. He saw McCone regularly in Special Group meetings, where he was dubbed "Dr. No" because he objected so often to covert action proposals.

³⁵ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 53; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; Parrott, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the DCI," 2 December 1963, *ibid.*, folder 146; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...November 14th[1963]," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8; Director 5454 to all Chiefs of Station, 10 August 1961, and Director 23620 to all Chiefs of Station, 9 November 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 6, folder 11;

³⁶ Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It*, 553, 556; Thomas J. Schoenbaum, *Waging Peace and War*, 142, 303-4, 392; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 7. ~~XX~~

³⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...," 6 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*.... 69. Whether McCone mentioned Rusk to the regents is unclear; in any event, Rusk became a professor of international law at the University of Georgia in 1970. ~~XX~~

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He generally thought the department's relations with CIA during McCone's tenure were "healthy and effective." As with Ball, McCone differed with Averell Harriman over Vietnam policy and had other disputes with him about covert action and counterinsurgency activities (Harriman often represented the department on the Special Group Counterinsurgency during 1964-65). Roger Hilsman liked McCone personally, finding in him "a rough and ready sense of decency." He observed that the DCI was content with his policy involvement through the NSC and "made no special effort to use the power of CIA to try to dominate the whole range of foreign policy." McCone and he were skeptical about the United States' long-term prospects in Vietnam, but they disagreed on how to improve them, with the DCI taking a much harder line on military action against the North. Among the ambassadorial corps, McCone had noteworthy squabbles with John Kenneth Galbraith and Henry Cabot Lodge over [redacted] Agency personnel and activities in Vietnam, respectively (to be described in subsequent chapters).³⁸ (U)

Presidential Policy Adviser and Political Emissary (U)

McCone assumed, or the White House assigned him, policy and political roles that broadened his responsibilities well beyond Intelligence Community management. He became an important formulator of the Kennedy administration's national security policy and an agent of some of its domestic political stratagems. No DCI before him had such a large portfolio, and none, except William Casey, has since. McCone, used to traveling in the highest circles of power in Washington, saw no conflict in serving simultaneously as a foreign policy adviser, political go-between, and intelligence chief. He regarded the first two functions as useful for raising CIA's prestige and expanding his influence over the community. McCone did not see himself as a free-wheeling national security expert. Rather, he believed that he limited himself to giving advice on areas in which intelligence information or analyses gave him special insight. Moreover, he was well aware of the danger of politicization—"You have to be very, very careful...[that] your views on the policy are not

affecting the purity of your intelligence...and you have to be awfully sure that nobody suspects that it is"—and largely succeeded at compartmenting policy from analysis.³⁹ (U)

As a member of the NSC, McCone joined in fashioning the administration's foreign policy on matters great and small, sensitive and mundane. At a "typical" NSC meeting, McCone would start the discussions with an intelligence briefing, sometimes helped by a senior CIA officer—usually Helms, Cline, or a substantive expert. After dismissing his subordinate, McCone would then answer questions from the president and other NSC members. At times he would take positions oblique to or at odds with the Agency information or analysis just presented, but he often qualified his remarks by indicating that he then was speaking as a "private citizen." At times he went beyond the meeting agenda to warn the president, Rusk, or McGeorge Bundy about developments they were overlooking because of the press of current events. Several times in 1963, for example, he reminded them of potential crises in the Middle East while they were preoccupied with Cuba and Vietnam. Because McCone did not believe he could carry out his dual roles as presidential coordinator for intelligence and policy adviser if he was not privy to complete information about administration dealings with foreign leaders, he requested and received from President Kennedy copies of all memoranda that Bundy and top Department of State officials wrote about their conversations with heads of state or government.⁴⁰ ~~SECRET~~

On the issue of nuclear weapons, the DCI spoke with special authority as a former AEC chairman. One of the clearest examples of the president calling on him for policy advice on a nonintelligence topic occurred in May 1963 during a high-level discussion about whether the United States should develop a nuclear "super bomb." After listening to Pentagon and AEC officials describe the weapon's capability and scenarios for its deployment, Kennedy asked McCone for his views. He proceeded to step well outside his role as DCI by outlining the military drawbacks of the bomb, suggesting how it should be tested if development were approved, assessing whether B-52s would still be able to penetrate Soviet airspace by the time the weapon was

³⁸ U. Alexis Johnson with Jef Olivarius McAllister, *The Right Hand of Power*, 317-18, 347-49; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 47, 82. For a brief account of INR during McCone's directorship, see Mark Stout and Dorothy Avery, "The Bureau of Intelligence and Research at Fifty," *Studies* 42, no. 2 (1998): 20-22. (U)

³⁹ Transcript of McCone interview with Alsop, 9 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3. (U)

⁴⁰ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 65-66; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. Bundy...", 28 February 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...26 March 1963...", "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President, December 2[, 1963]...", and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with President Johnson...27 December 1963," *FRUS, 1961-1963, XVIII, Near East, 1962-1963*, 374-75, 436-37, 817, 858-59; Kirkpatrick untitled memorandum to Cline, Action Memorandum A-318, 4 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 2, folder 2. ~~SECRET~~

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McCone with President Kennedy at the White House in April 1963 (U) Photo: JFK Library

ready, and proposing that a lighter, more easily deliverable version be built instead. The president agreed with McCone for the most part and instructed the AEC to consider a smaller bomb like the one the DCI preferred.⁴¹ ~~(S)~~

The main reason McCone "could wear two hats," in Richard Helms's phrase, was that he enjoyed excellent relations with John and Robert Kennedy. McCone and the president were not close personally, and the DCI neither shared in the youthful camaraderie of the White House's "Irish Mafia" nor had a relative in the Cabinet. Nevertheless, he was an accepted and respected member of the national security coterie and bore the status of a Cabinet officer and the

informal prestige of an experienced, well-connected public figure with unique knowledge and perspectives. McCone met alone with President Kennedy about every two weeks, on no particular schedule, but as the need arose. He also saw the president frequently with one or two others (typically McGeorge Bundy or Gen. Maxwell Taylor from the White House, or Helms or Far East Division chief William Colby from the Agency). In addition, spontaneous and informal discussions often occurred between them before and after they met in larger group settings—for example, the NSC or its ancillary components such as the Standing Group and the Special Group—and at times, if the presidential calendar permitted, McCone arranged quick visits to the Oval Office to discuss new developments.⁴² ~~(S)~~

McCone found President Kennedy "exceedingly interested" in all aspects of intelligence and willing to spend a good deal of time learning ways to use the information and capabilities the Intelligence Community afforded him. The president, McCone observed, conducted his relationship with the community with far less structure than Eisenhower. He dismantled much of his predecessor's staff machinery (such as the NSC Planning Board, the Operations Coordination Board, and the Cabinet secretariat) and instead used a loose agglomeration of ad hoc working groups and catch-as-catch-can meetings with advisers. Moreover, McCone also noted, Kennedy had more intellectual curiosity toward intelligence than had Truman or, later, Johnson. In addition to his often-noted infatuation with counterinsurgency and covert action, Kennedy was fascinated with imagery intelligence. Robert McNamara estimated that the president in his first month in office spent up to a fifth of his time examining IMINT (and other reporting) on Soviet missiles. Accordingly, McCone—who also thought technical intelligence had great value—made sure that the take from U-2 flights and satellite missions figured prominently in CIA briefings at the White House.⁴³ (U)

A few months into the job, McCone grew concerned that the NSC was meeting too infrequently for him to maintain

⁴¹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion on the Development of a High-Yield Nuclear Weapon..." 21 May 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4. McCone also served on a White House committee to develop policies for stockpiling strategic materials. The other members of this Executive Stockpile Committee were the secretaries of state, defense, interior, commerce, and labor, the head of the General Services Administration, and the acting director of the Office of Emergency Planning, who served as chairman. The committee submitted its report to the president on 19 March 1962. It recommended executive actions and legislation to increase the flexibility the several departments had to acquire, maintain, exchange, and dispose of nearly \$8 billion worth of strategic materials. NSAM No. 126, "Review of Principles and Policies Guiding the Stockpiling of Strategic Materials," 7 February 1962, and "Report of the Executive Stockpile Committee to President Kennedy," 19 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, IX, Foreign Economic Policy*, 776, 779-86. ~~(S)~~

⁴² Richard Helms oral history interview by R. Jack Smith, Washington, DC, 3 June 1982, 24 (hereafter Helms/Smith OH); McCone calendars; Carter-Knoche OH, 9-10. The NSC Standing Group—comprising the under secretary of state for political affairs (who acted as chairman), the deputy secretary of defense, the president's national security adviser, and the DCI—organized and monitored the work of the full NSC. "Standing Group Meeting, January 5, 1962: Record of Actions," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5. ~~(S)~~

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necessary access to the president. (The NSC held 21 meetings in Kennedy's first year, compared to 51 during Eisenhower's.) He did not want his relationship with the president to become a casualty of bureaucratic inertia, and he raised the problem with the national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy. Bundy said while his own staff kept Kennedy "generally informed" on intelligence matters, the DCI should insist on seeing the president at least once a week. McCone did not get on Kennedy's schedule that often, but he took advantage of the free-wheeling non-bureaucracy at the White House to maintain regular contact. He regarded his "face time" with Kennedy as perhaps his most important leadership asset—so important that when he lost it under Lyndon Johnson, he began to think about resigning (see Chapters 15 and 18).⁴⁴ (U)

In the case of Robert Kennedy, the president's "brother protector" and closest adviser, McCone did not have to worry as much about keeping in touch; the business came to him. The attorney general took an active, personal interest in the Agency's affairs after the Bay of Pigs, particularly in counterinsurgency and covert action. The president was determined that another such intelligence disaster would not occur and wanted his brother to make sure CIA would be an effective tool of the administration's activist foreign policy. According to U. Alexis Johnson, "You always had the feeling when dealing with Bobby that he was the fearless watchdog in behalf of the President. He had enormous possessive pride in the President, and he was looking after the President's interests in a way in which he felt that the President could not."⁴⁵ (U)

McCone had not met Robert Kennedy until after his appointment as DCI but soon became close friends with the much younger attorney general and his wife. They socialized privately at the Kennedy's estate in McLean, Virginia—Hickory Hill—and sometimes attended Mass together. Senior Agency officers differ, however, on whether Robert often stopped at Headquarters unannounced on his way to or from his nearby home in McLean to see McCone or check on anti-Castro operations. Lyman Kirkpatrick says he



McCone and Robert Kennedy at the DCI's swearing-in (U)

did, but Richard Helms does not recall frequent, unscheduled drop-ins, and Walter Elder did not mention any when questioned about the DCI's relationship with the attorney general. (Perhaps it was McCone who came calling; "Hank" Knoche remembers that the DCI occasionally arrived at work late because of a last-minute breakfast at Hickory Hill.) McCone cultivated his connection with the president's brother as the next best thing to access to the president himself. Helms has said that McCone drew even closer to Robert after the Cuban missile crisis, when his alarmist assessment of Soviet intentions in Cuba proved correct, upstaging every senior administration official (including the president) and antagonizing many. More than ever, McCone needed the attorney general as his patron at the White House. The DCI regretted that Robert resigned to run for the Senate in 1964, saying that he was "very fond of Bobby personally—I think he's a great little fellow." McCone consequently never understood why Robert did not publicly credit him with anticipating the Soviet nuclear missile deployment in Cuba, even though he should have realized

⁴³ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Christopher Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, 258–59; John Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 99–102; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 40; Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy*, 11–14. (U)

⁴⁴ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with McGeorge Bundy," 7 April 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*..., 202. James Angleton recounted an incident involving McCone and President Kennedy that he thought provided a good snapshot of their relationship. Angleton was in the DCI's office when the president called to ask McCone to come to Camp David for the weekend. The DCI declined, saying his wife was not feeling well. "I don't think there is any Director who would not have had his wife out of intensive care to go to Camp David," Angleton later remarked, but McCone was on such good terms with the White House that he could demur for personal reasons. Angleton oral history interview by [redacted] 27 July 1984, tape 2, 27 ~~X~~

⁴⁵ Parmet, 214. On the JFK-RFK relationship, see Hilty. (U)

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that the president's ever faithful brother would put family loyalty first.⁴⁶ ~~SECRET~~

McCone functioned as a political envoy for the Kennedy administration to the Republican opposition, particularly through his regular meetings with the GOP's elder statesman, former President Eisenhower.⁴⁷ The general's views still carried weight with millions of Americans, and the new administration worked to keep his support or, at a minimum, forestall his criticism. According to Robert Kennedy, the president, "feeling Eisenhower was important and his [own] election was so close...always went out of his way to make sure that Eisenhower was brought in on all matters and that Eisenhower couldn't hurt the administration by going off and attacking." McCone's assignment in part was to counteract the alleged misinformation the general received from the administration's Republican critics and keep him from making intemperate remarks out of ignorance. The DCI recalled that the president insisted that he see Eisenhower every four or six weeks, and immediately when a major international development arose. McCone was to "exercise all persuasion [on Eisenhower] to support foreign policies and particularly foreign trade issue[s]. [The] President recognized, and in no way resented[,] differences on domestic issues, but emphatically urged Eisenhower's assistance on foreign policy matters."⁴⁸ ~~SECRET~~

McCone found that Eisenhower was "bitterly critical, privately," of the administration, especially its handling of Vietnam, and would recommend courses of action to which President Kennedy "responded very thoughtfully" when the DCI passed them on. As the 1962 congressional campaign heated up, Eisenhower used McCone to convey to the White House the fact that he was "disturbed that foreign policy was getting into politics" and quoted a speech by President Kennedy that referred to "eight years of drifting" under the previous administration. The general later told McCone that he and other Republicans would feel free to criticize what they regarded as the White House's flawed

conduct of foreign policy but would refrain from commenting on diplomatic details. During the Cuban missile crisis, the president dispatched McCone to Gettysburg to brief the general and, he hoped, to secure a public statement of support. Eisenhower obliged by declaring that the administration's actions should not be debated in public.⁴⁹ ~~SECRET~~

The White House also drew on McCone's extensive ties to the American business community to assuage corporation executives' qualms that the reformist "New Frontier" would depart from the Eisenhower administration's benevolent attitude toward private enterprise. After the major American steel companies announced a large and unexpected price increase in April 1962, President Kennedy created an informal task force to work on the issue. Its members included McCone, Washington lawyer Clark Clifford, Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, and Robert McNamara. As an industrialist since before World War II, McCone probably knew as much about steel making as any senior government official. He, his colleagues on the task force, and many of the administration's other members with Republican or corporate backgrounds called or met with their contacts in the business world to build pressure on the steel companies to roll back the price hike. During the next three days, the companies' united front broke, and they rescinded the increase. McCone kept in touch with his boardroom associates on behalf of the administration while tempers cooled in the ensuing weeks. After attending the annual Business Council meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia, in mid-May 1962, McCone reported to the president that although corporate leaders were still perturbed about the steel price affair, they probably did not plan to carry on a "cold war" with the administration. The DCI also communicated their complaints about proposed tax legislation, especially a levy on foreign corporations. He proved to be one of the Kennedy White House's more important sources of information about how it was regarded in executive suites across America.⁴⁸ ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁶ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 14, 346; Hilty, 424; Kirkpatrick, *OH*, 24-25; Helms/McAuliffe *OH*, 2-3; Elder/McAuliffe *OH*, 27, 36; Carter-Knoche *OH*, 8; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 132; transcript of McCone meeting with Marguerite Higgins, 9 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁷ Sources used on McCone and Eisenhower were: *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 55, 346; McCone *OH*, 38-42; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion between President Kennedy and DCI on...January 7, [1962]...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; McCone, "Memorandum of Conversation with General Eisenhower...", 26 September 1962, and "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with former President Eisenhower...", 5 October 1962, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Conversation with General Eisenhower..." 17 October 1962, Mary S. McAuliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, 165-68 (hereafter *CMC Documents*); McCone calendars, entries for 17 October-30 November 1962. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁸ *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 334; Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile in Power*, chap. 27; Parmet, chap. 10; Giglio, 123-40; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 631-40; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 443-69; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...May 15, 1962...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1. McCone continued to work with the White House on the steel price issue for at least another year. See, e.g., material about a meeting with the president on 10 April 1963 in *ibid.*, folder 4. ~~SECRET~~

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McCone took charge of the Intelligence Community at a time when official and unofficial monitors were paying more attention to it and subjecting it to greater criticism than in the past. Operational and counterintelligence setbacks (the U-2 shootdown, the defection of two NSA officers to the Soviet Union in 1960, and the Bay of Pigs debacle); the dismissal of Allen Dulles; the Kennedy administration's aggressive use of covert action; and charges of intelligence failure before the Cuban missile crisis combined to put the community—and McCone's leadership of it—under heightened scrutiny from Congress, PFIAB, and the media. McCone's methods for dealing with each of these institutions of accountability ranged from cordial cooperation to prickly aloofness to distrusting disengagement. (U)

Working the Hill (U)

McCone was satisfied with the traditional benign system of oversight by four congressional subcommittees—of the Appropriations and Armed Services committees of both houses—that existed when he was appointed. The chairmen of the so-called "CIA subcommittees" during McCone's tenure were Clarence Cannon (D-MO) and Carl Vinson (D-GA) in the House, and Carl Hayden (D-AZ) and Richard Russell (D-GA) in the Senate. These powerful legislators believed in the importance of intelligence and in presidential preeminence in foreign affairs. They took a hands-off approach to monitoring CIA and protected it from congressional critics. McCone's relationships with them and other key lawmakers were "just truly excellent," recalls his legislative counsel, John Warner. From his experience at the Pentagon and the AEC, the DCI understood legislative-executive dynamics and grasped the unique features of CIA's interaction with Congress. He prepared his presentations to the committees thoroughly, answered questions candidly, and did not regard seeing a staffer as beneath his station. Congressman Jamie Whitten (D-MS) said McCone "gave [intelligence] to you straight and unadulterated. That's the way we liked it." Sen. Stuart Symington (D-MO) recalled that

the Hill always welcomed and looked forward to McCone's appearances. Some observers believed the DCI never forgot that an unprecedentedly large number of senators had opposed his nomination, and he was determined to prove his worth.⁴⁹ ~~XX~~

McCone worked hard at maintaining good personal ties to Congress in part to prevent lawmakers from instituting more aggressive oversight processes.⁵⁰ The U-2 shootdown in May 1960, the failed Bay of Pigs operation in April 1961, and the controversy over his own nomination in September 1961 had prompted some members of Congress to call for a joint committee to monitor the Agency. Like the administration and the chairmen of the CIA subcommittees, McCone did not support establishment of such an entity, which was first proposed in the mid-1950s and had persistent backers on the Hill—notably Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-MN) and Rep. John Lindsay (R-NY). The Agency's official position was that the historical system of oversight had matured, that a joint committee would not necessarily support CIA any better, and that the Agency's oldest congressional allies would be insulted. McCone—who privately decried "this continual prattle about this watchdog committee"—furthermore believed it would likely have a staff of disgruntled ex-CIA officers who had, in Walter Elder's words, "a particular ax to grind and who would know where the bodies were buried." If Congress wanted to increase its supervision of intelligence matters, McCone thought the best way to do so without compromising security or the Agency's congenial relations with its oversight panels was to include on them members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He believed the three committees dealing with defense, dollars, and diplomacy had a rightful interest in CIA matters, and that periodic, informal briefings of them would afford Congress adequate opportunity to supervise the Agency.~~XX~~

McCone also gently encouraged members of the CIA subcommittees to meet more often with him and Agency briefers as a way to demonstrate to critics that genuine over-

⁴⁹ Gerald K. Haines and [redacted] "The CIA and Congress: Early Oversight, 1947–1965," chap. 3; John Warner oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 22 August 1983 (hereafter Warner/[redacted] OH), 7–9, 11; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 66. Congressional oversight of CIA during the early 1960s is covered in Haines and [redacted] chap. 3; Snider, 1–4; Smist, 4–9; and David M. Barrett, "Glimpses of a Hidden History: Sen. Richard Russell, Congress, and Oversight of the CIA," *IJIC* 11, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 271–98. ~~XX~~

⁵⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Haines and [redacted] 89–92, 97–101, 104–5; Elder, [redacted] OH, 58; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with Secretary Rusk [et al.], April 27, 1962," and "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land...", 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper, 6 December 1963, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 4; McCone letter to William Raborn (DCI), 4 April 1966, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 3, folder 67; Warner memoranda to McCone, "Report on CIA Relations with Congress—1962," 3 December 1962, and "Legislative Matters," 29 November 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-260, Job 84-00473R, box 3, folder 18; Warner memorandum about McCone meeting with Carl Vinson, 16 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Smist, 5, citing interview with Clark Clifford on 27 May 1983. ~~XX~~

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sight was occurring. He and other CIA officers held 32 formal and informal meetings with Congress in 1962—more than in any previous year—and over 30 in 1963. The Agency also provided information to, or in other ways assisted, several committees besides those charged with oversight, such as the House Government Operations and Un-American Activities committees, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, and the Joint Economic Committee and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Gradually the impetus for more intrusive oversight waned, largely owing to lack of interest on the Hill. A CIA subcommittee chairman confided that he had “no desire to pry into Agency affairs,” and Clark Clifford later described the prevailing sentiment: “Congress chose not to be involved and preferred to be uninformed.” As a measure of that attitude, CIA briefed congressional committees only 13 times in 1964. ~~XX~~

The debate on the joint oversight committee took a spiteful turn during 1963–64 when McCone and Marshall Carter refused to share sensitive intelligence with Rep. Lindsay, who then called for an investigation of CIA and argued for a joint committee in an article in *Esquire* magazine. A similar essay by Sen. McCarthy appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* around the same time, and together they attracted wide attention. The two pieces enraged McCone, who privately denounced them as “a series of absolute misstatements,” called the lawmakers “sons of bitches,” and threatened to resign to protest their accepting royalties for attacking the Agency. President Johnson “deplored” McCarthy’s article and asked McCone to see the senator to “try to put an end to the type of criticism that he has been directing towards the Agency.” When tempers subsided, the DCI had other CIA officers court Lindsay, apologize for the refusal to share information, politely and privately correct his inaccuracies, and respond in detail to the criticisms he had made of the Agency. That treatment seemed to mollify the congressman. He still advocated a joint oversight panel but stopped criticizing CIA itself. Nothing came of proposals for the joint committee while McCone was DCI. Agency lobbying of key senators and representatives, and the efforts of CIA’s congressional allies, succeeded in stalling the measure.⁵¹ ~~XX~~

McCone stayed attentive to the holders of CIA’s purse-strings—the chairmen of the two Appropriations Committees, Clarence Cannon in the House and Carl Hayden in the Senate. The DCI took special pains with Cannon, who had started looking more carefully at Agency expenditures late in Dulles’s directorship. One of Cannon’s staffers advised McCone early on that the congressman “has long regarded CIA as something special and has put it under his wing,” and Warner told the DCI that “Mr. Cannon has been heard to say in effect ‘if an agency head is not sufficiently interested in his appropriation to appear personally to defend it, maybe he does not need an appropriation.’” Accordingly, McCone met with Cannon frequently and briefed his committee personally. The efforts paid off. The CIA appropriations subcommittee looked closely at the Agency’s budget for only “a matter of hours each year,” Warner wrote. More intense examination was unnecessary because Cannon believed the CIA was “one of the few [agencies] in government that had a proper regard for economy and utilized its funds in a conscientious manner.”⁵² ~~XX~~

For the most part, McCone encountered much the same attitude of salutary neglect in the Senate, although, starting in 1963, he began to quarrel with the Armed Services Committee over how to budget [REDACTED] for joint Pentagon-CIA paramilitary operations in Southeast Asia. The DCI could not persuade Richard Russell and other Senate friends to resolve the dispute in the Agency’s favor. Indeed, Russell—more as an exercise in political symbolism than from any disfavor he felt toward CIA—was more inclined than any Agency benefactor on the Hill to make a token cut in its appropriation. When Russell’s committee proposed a [REDACTED] reduction, McCone was distressed at what he called “this most unwelcome surprise.” He argued that “when [the reduction is] distributed against an already tightly prepared program level[,] the impact is serious.” Russell was too powerful, however, and the reduction went through.⁵³ ~~XX~~

On another occasion, McCone found himself in an unenviable position: on the receiving end of a Russell rebuke. Just before he was to testify before Russell’s Armed Services committee in early 1964, the chairman lambasted

⁵¹ Haines and [REDACTED] 94–97; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Sen. Stuart Symington, 5 February 1964, and Sen. Thomas Dodd, 18 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 5; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson...on January 4th, [1964],” *ibid.*, box 6, folder 7; Harry Howe Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment*, 172. ~~XX~~

⁵² Haines and [REDACTED] 110–13. ~~XX~~

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 113–18. ~~XX~~

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him for having DDI Cline provide unclassified information about the Soviet economy to journalists. This release of CIA material was widely but erroneously described at the time as a "press conference." Richard Helms, who was present at McCone's dressing-down, recalled the senator telling the red-faced DCI, "If you ever do this again, if you ever go public in this manner on things of this kind again, I simply am not going to support the Agency in its works or its budget or anything else.... The Agency must stay in the back-ground. I just want to tell you this is my warning to you about this." The disclosure also disturbed other powerful figures on the Senate CIA subcommittees, such as Leverett Saltonstall (R-MA) and John Stennis (D-MS), as well as Congressmen Vinson and Cannon, all of whom conveyed their concerns to the Agency. The controversy perplexed McCone, who explained to Stennis that for years CIA had released information on the Soviet economy in unclassified materials bearing the Agency's name and in speeches and public testimony by Allen Dulles and other senior CIA executives. Instead of accepting responsibility for a miscue that rankled important congressional champions, however, an uncontrite McCone blamed his public affairs chief and all but accused unidentified Department of State officials of "harassing CIA in the press."⁵⁴

Watching the President's Watchdog (U)

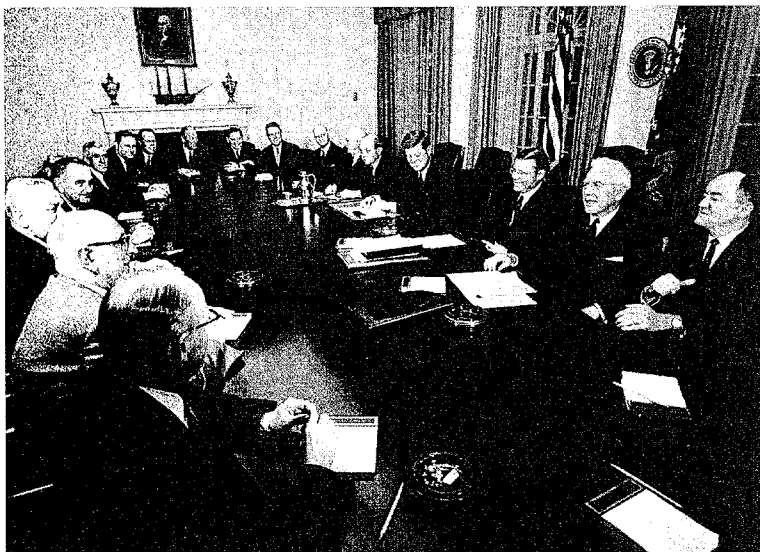
In 1956, President Eisenhower—acting on recommendations of blue-ribbon commissions on intelligence and gov-

ernment organization—established the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, composed of prominent private citizens and retired senior government officials, to "conduct an objective review of the foreign intelligence activities of the government and the performance of the functions of the Central Intelligence Agency." President Kennedy regarded the board as a relic of Eisenhower's military-style staff system and a needless layer of review, and he deactivated it soon after taking office. Scarcely two weeks

after the Cuban fiasco, however, he reestablished it as PFIAB. During the next seven months, PFIAB met 25 times—more than the Board of Consultants had met in the previous five years combined—and during Kennedy's term it submitted 170 formal recommendations. The president privately called PFIAB the most useful of all his advisory boards. McCone's effort to assert personal authority over the intelligence process did not set well with PFIAB, and he, in turn, did not like a group of outsiders inter-

posed between him and the president. The board had opened authority to second-guess his conduct as DCI and as head of CIA, but no operational or administrative responsibility for carrying out its recommendations.⁵⁵

McCone had 28 meetings with the board in 42 months as DCI (most of them during 1962–63) and several discussions with PFIAB chairmen alone. (While McCone was DCI, the board had two chairmen: James Killian until April 1963, and then Clark Clifford.) His sessions with the board



McCone, President Kennedy, and Secretaries Rusk and McNamara brief congressional leaders at the White House in September 1963. (U)

Photo: JFK Library

⁵⁴ Helms, [redacted] OH, 12-13; McCone letters to Sen. John Stennis, 14 January 1964, and Clifford, 16 January 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122;

⁵⁵ Philip K. Edwards, "The President's Board: 1956–60," *Studies* 13, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 113–28; Executive Order 10938, *Federal Register*, 4 May 1961, 3951; Andrew, 272; "Minutes of PFIAB Meeting on January 30, 1964," 3, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10002, PFIAB Records, NARA; Clark Clifford with Richard Holbrooke, *Counsel to the President*, 349–56; Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH, 23–24; [Helms] memorandum to McCone, "Notes on President's Board Practices and Procedures," c. August 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01038R, box 7, folder 121.

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followed a pattern. He would make some introductory remarks, and then the group would work its way through the usually lengthy agenda one item at a time. More often than not, they ran out of time before completing their intended business. The discussions included much give-and-take and were businesslike in tone. McCone's answers were candid but not detailed. On occasion, he got somewhat defensive, but usually he was willing, when pressed, to admit that the community had been inadequate in some regard.⁵⁶ ~~XX~~



James Killian (U)



Clark Clifford (U)

McCone's relationship with PFIAB got off to a strained start when, less than two months after he became DCI, the board criticized the Intelligence Community for failing to forecast the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and a military coup in Syria one month later. It concluded that US intelligence reporting and analysis needed to be more responsive to breaking events and disseminated more efficiently, and it suggested that a new watch system be established. The White House requested a response from USIB. In reply, McCone and the USIB-member department heads disagreed with many of PFIAB's contentions and instead recommended that existing procedures be fine-tuned, not scrapped. McCone did not want the community's credibility to suffer because of a "hair trigger" warning system:

[O]ne of the disciplines our community must impose on itself is the careful evaluation and screening of the flood of reports received on possible crisis situations. I believe it [is] preferable to accept the occasional risk of surprise, rather than disseminate many unjustified alarms as insurance against charges of failure.⁵⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone replied directly to Chairman James Killian with a strong defense of community analysts and their methods:

It is essential to useful intelligence dissemination that discretion and selectivity be used by intelligence officers. A system which highlighted all the contingent situations where trouble or a change in circumstances might occur would be of little use to a policymaker; it would debase its own currency. Any exercise of selectivity runs the risk of omission of developments which with hindsight can be criticized. The opposite practice of indiscriminate reporting would, perhaps, protect the Intelligence Community from charges of sins of omission, but would overwhelm and invite indifference from the policymaker.

...With the advantage of hindsight, it is often possible to construct a case supporting a charge of intelligence failure. The professional analyst, exercising his judgment before the fact, must be wary of unwarranted forecasts, especially when these require choices amongst numerous plausible alternatives.

The DCI went on to criticize the board's reasoning from hindsight that "because an indicator turns out to be significant it must have been recognizable as significant before the event." Analysts cannot always gauge that importance when they must make their judgments. McCone and PFIAB would repeat many of the themes of this exchange when they examined the intelligence aspects of the Cuban missile crisis in late 1962 and early 1963.⁵⁸ (U)

Other points of contention between the DCI and the board soon arose. McCone questioned whether PFIAB was

⁵⁶ Memoranda about McCone's briefings to PFIAB in CMS Files, Job 92B01038R, box 8, folders 139-41; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone about PFIAB briefings, 3 January 1963, *ibid.*, folder 140. ~~XX~~

⁵⁷ Lay, vol. 4, 216-24; McCone memorandum to the president, "Early Warning in National Intelligence," HS Files, HS/HC-419, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 14. ~~XX~~

⁵⁸ In his memorandum to Killian, McCone made other points about the two issues at hand. On the Berlin Wall, he pointed out that CIA's current publications had suggested that the East Germans might close the Soviet zone in Berlin. On the Syrian coup, he remarked that the country's endemic instability and the frequency of coup plots and rumors made the threshold for reporting them very high. There was, he claimed, no reason to attach greater urgency to the intelligence about the plot that proved successful than to information about several other recent conspiracies. McCone memorandum to Killian, "Review of Advance Intelligence Pertaining to the Berlin Wall and the Syrian Coup Incidents," 30 April 1962, ERWI doc. no. ado-14555, doc. bar code no. CIA98-960007077100030025. (U)

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authorized to look into covert action operations, but the Agency's general counsel advised him that a "legalistic hassle" over the CIA charter and President Kennedy's executive order reestablishing the board "would not be very productive." Instead, the DCI decided to restrict detailed discussions about covert actions to a PFIAB subcommittee and to apprise the full membership only on a need-to-know basis. He did not like PFIAB members dealing with USIB departments without discussing the results with him, and he became especially irritated when the board "picked up what I had reported to them as activities under way, and had used them as a basis for their recommendations on what should be done." "I felt the board had no obligation to accept my views or to support my actions, and I felt no obligation to look with favor on their recommendations." He believed, for example, that the board's prescriptions concerning NRO and the satellite reconnaissance program would subordinate CIA's interests to the Pentagon's and turn space espionage into an Air Force operation. Finally, McCone was thoroughly unhappy with PFIAB's postmortem on the Cuban missile crisis, which charged the Intelligence Community—and, by inference, him—with serious lapses in collection, analysis, and management.⁵⁹ ~~XX~~

McCone's dealings with Killian, dating back to the former's AEC days, were professionally cordial, if a bit stiff at times, but an edge clearly is detectable in his contacts with Clifford, whom he regarded as more threatening and more arrogant. McCone had preferred that another scientist succeed Killian because of the growing importance of scientific and technical intelligence collection and analysis. He did, however, support making Clifford—already a board member—the new chairman, probably figuring that fruitless opposition to the selection would only poison their future relations. By the time Clifford took over in April 1963, the DCI was thoroughly disillusioned with PFIAB, complaining to the White House that the "strange things" it

did were "very annoying and very disturbing...more of a detriment than a help" and made it "the most dangerous instrument around." These sentiments probably got back to the strong-willed Clifford, who planned to make the board an independent oversight body regardless of what the DCI thought. McCone must not have concealed his reservations very well. "I think Mr. Clifford has the impression that I resent the Board," he wrote in ironic surprise.⁶⁰ ~~XX~~

McCone was right. From Clifford's standpoint, the DCI viewed the board with undisguised suspicion, regarded meetings with it as a nuisance, continually delayed providing it with information (notably during the Cuban missile crisis), and tried to take it over as a personal advisory group. Moreover, Clifford mistakenly wrote, McCone ignored PFIAB's recommendation that he concentrate on managing the Intelligence Community and delegate responsibility for running CIA to a career intelligence officer. Lastly, Clifford concluded from his own experience in government that the community's competence was debatable.⁶¹ (U)

Adding to the antipathy was McCone's justified belief that PFIAB's executive director, J. Patrick Coyne, often exceeded his authority and, by insisting that he receive a presidential appointment and act as USIB chairman in the DCI's absence, showed his ambitions for power. A lawyer and former FBI special agent, and previously an adviser to the NSC on covert action, Coyne was tough and inquisitive and, in McCone's mind, showed he was no friend of CIA by writing PFIAB's missile crisis critique. Neither McCone nor Clifford backed down on matters of substance, but the DCI recognized that he was in the weaker position bureaucratically. When Clifford threatened to resign from the board if, in his words, McCone "was going to set himself up as a censor of what PFIAB could and could not see," President Kennedy stepped in and told the DCI to be more cooperative. McCone later said "I accepted [Clifford's] statement

⁵⁹ Houston memorandum to McCone, "Charter of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 21 June 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 121; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 20 June 1962, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 140; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," *ibid.*, folder 122; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land," 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Notes on Killian Board Recommendations," 25 March 1963, *ibid.*, folder 5. ~~XX~~

⁶⁰ McCone letter to Bundy, ER 63-2547, 28 March 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Meeting with Mr. Clark Clifford[,] 20 June 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Bundy, 7 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4. McCone may have shared the objections that the *New York Times* raised to Clifford's selection: "Mr. Clifford has a brilliant mind, but, as a long-time trouble-shooter for the Democratic party, he is inextricably associated with partisan politics. He replaces a skilled and objective scientist-administrator. The selection is at best unfortunate. It is bound to give the impression that our intelligence activities will now be monitored—not by a chairman who is an expert in the field—but by one who is essentially a politician." *New York Times*, 29 April 1963, McCone clipping file, HIC. ~~XX~~

⁶¹ Clifford later told an interviewer that "in some instances in the foreign intelligence field, you had the feeling that you were in a ball park and a ball had been hit out to midway left-center field, and the center fielder and the left fielder would both go for it and crash and the ball would fall to the ground. Other times—and [in] some dramatic instances—a ball would be hit out to left center field and each would think that the other was going to get it and the ball would fall on the ground again." Quoted in Parmet, 212. (U)

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that the board is established for life, and if the President wanted, I would work with them." With other intelligence matters placing larger demands on his time and equities, McCone largely withdrew from this stalemate and turned over much of the undesirable PFIAB liaison responsibility to DDCI Carter.⁶² ~~SECRET~~

Shunning the Spotlight (U)

In contrast to the greater openness he sought with Congress, McCone hunkered down when it came to public relations and media contacts. He believed the Intelligence Community should remove itself from public view wherever possible because too much information about its activities had appeared in the media. He spurned suggestions that he should try to correct popular misconceptions about CIA, saying that the president and the secretaries of state and defense had the responsibility for refurbishing the Agency's image. After all, he noted to a visiting journalist, "they're the ones that keep the lights burning all night in this building." McCone would not give outside addresses or on-the-record interviews (although he had numerous background contacts with the Washington press corps), minimized public appearances, would not accept new honorary degrees from universities, and tried to discourage journalists from writing about the Agency. He dissuaded *Time* and *Newsweek* from preparing cover stories about him and tried to persuade Stewart Alsop not to write a piece for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1963. He also directed all CIA officers to report any contacts with the press—a longstanding requirement that had been routinely ignored.⁶³ ~~SECRET~~

Evaluations of McCone's approach varied. Killian and Bundy thought he went too far to lower the Agency's profile and suggested he make some "appropriate" public appearances, but Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* urged him to continue his present reticence. McCone was scarcely more forthcoming in speeches to official audiences in closed venues—the Foreign Service Institute and the military war

colleges, for example. His talks were mostly bland descriptions of the Intelligence Community structure combined with potted assessments of current intelligence issues that rarely conveyed more information ~~SECRET~~

McCone relented a few times and met with influential journalists when they said they would go ahead with a story even without a DCI interview. These occasional sessions helped McCone maintain good relations with most of the press, although they did not assure favorable treatment. In the summer of 1963, for example, McCone (along with Bundy and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric) met with Alsop to refute the journalist's contention that rivalry between CIA and the Department of Defense was hurting the national interest. The DCI confronted Alsop about the article after it ran, charging that it "totally ignored the facts." Alsop replied that lower-level sources in the Agency and DIA corroborated his thesis. In part, McCone worried that media criticism would depress employee morale and impair recruitment of new personnel. Later in 1963, McCone told *Life* staffers that he was afraid college graduates seeking careers in international affairs would be dissuaded from working at CIA and choose to join the Foreign Service instead.⁶⁵ ~~SECRET~~

Incremental Gains (U)

Looking back on his directorship, McCone was satisfied with his accomplishments in increasing the DCI's ability to manage the Intelligence Community. From a more recent vantage point, however, McCone's achievements as DCI seem less impressive than he regarded them at the time, and certainly were less extensive than the changes he implemented as D/CIA. They were also more transient, depending for their durability on the administrative inclinations of subsequent DCIs. For example, the revitalized

⁶² Clifford, 354–55; McCone untitled memorandum about Coyne, 10 April 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," *ibid.*, box 7, folder 122; Kirkpatrick, 218; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 24; Thomas Parrott oral history interview by Michael Warner, Washington, DC, 15 October 1999 (hereafter Parrott/Warner OH), 12; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Dr. Killian and Dr. Land...", 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2. ~~SECRET~~

⁶³ McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 14 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 12; Stanley J. Grogan (Office of Public Affairs), "Memorandum for the Record...DCI-John Steele Conference...15 August 1962...", ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 330; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussions Between Mr. Stewart Alsop and Mr. McCone...", 12 April 1963, McCone Papers, folder 5; transcript of McCone-Alsop interview, 9 April 1963, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with *Newsweek* reporters, 22 October 1963, *ibid.*, folder 6; transcript of McCone meeting with John Chancellor (NBC), 13 January 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 2. ~~SECRET~~

⁶⁴ McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...with Dr. Killian," 1 August 1962, and "Memorandum Covering Discussion with Mr. Arthur Krock...August 10, 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone speech files, *ibid.*, box 5, folders 15–17, and box 9, folder 6. ~~SECRET~~

⁶⁵ McCone untitled memorandum to Elder, 1 August 1963, and Kirkpatrick memorandum to Coyne, "The Alsop Article," 6 August 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 30, folder 1; transcript of McCone meeting with John Jessup and John Steele (both with *Life*), 17 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 6. ~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~*Setting a New Course (II): Director of Central Intelligence (U)*

USIB—in McCone's "chairman of the board" paradigm, his most important success—had much less visibility after Richard Helms became DCI. Helms instead relied more on NIPE—probably McCone's key management innovation inside the Agency—to assist him in running community affairs. Overall, McCone's experience as DCI provides a case study of the observation that "[t]he organization and leadership of the Intelligence Community is a structural oddity."

It is something of a holding company, with the DCI more "first among equals" than someone with true

executive authority. He is the principal adviser to the president on matters of intelligence, but his relations with the heads of other key intelligence organizations are more that of a colleague than a boss. As a result, the primary tool available to the DCI is persuasion.⁶⁶

The institutional and political constraints under which the DCI must function became starkly apparent to McCone as CIA took on major roles in the Kennedy administration's foreign policy initiatives—especially those in Latin America and Southeast Asia. (U)

⁶⁶ McCone, [redacted] DH, 8; Council on Foreign Relations, *Making Intelligence Smarter: The Future of U.S. Intelligence*, 25. (U)

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Into the Cuban Crucible (I): Covert Action against Castro (U)

Almost as soon as he had taken his oath of office, John McCone was caught up in the Kennedy administration's fixation with Cuba and its communist leader, Fidel Castro. McCone participated—both as Intelligence Community leader and policy adviser—in many of the US government's most sensitive, high-level discussions about removing Castro from power and, during the Cuban missile crisis, responding to the Soviet Union's challenge to US strategic interests. He agreed with administration strategy toward Cuba but not with its tactics. McCone shared official US animosity toward *Fidelismo* and believed the United States must make Cuba's experiment with communism fail, but as DCI he faced a bureaucratic imperative: keeping CIA out of another questionable covert enterprise while restoring its reputation and capabilities after the Bay of Pigs debacle. His dilemma was in having to minimize the risk of further damage to the Agency without appearing feckless or obstructionist to a White House whose mantra was "action." (U)

President John F. Kennedy and his senior policymakers, determined counterrevolutionaries almost to a man, probably spent as much, if not more, of their time on Cuba than on any other foreign policy issue. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara went so far as to say that he and his colleagues "were hysterical about Castro at the time of the Bay of Pigs and thereafter." Just before Kennedy took office, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had declared his support for "wars of national liberation," and the White House regarded the presence of a pro-Soviet revolutionary dictatorship just offshore, in a region the United States historically had treated almost as a protectorate, as a serious threat to national security and to the welfare and stability of America's Latin neighbors. This determination to be rid of Castro—whose ideology was, wrote then-White House aide Walt Rostow, "a moral and political offense to us"—intensified after the Bay of Pigs operation, a humiliation to the president personally and the United States politically.¹ (U)

The president made his intentions known publicly and privately. In a speech a few days after the US-backed invasion brigade was routed in April 1961, Kennedy declared that "We intend to profit from this lesson...to re-examine and reorient our forces of all kinds...to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war." Around that time, he told the NSC that "US policy toward Cuba should aim at the downfall of Castro." The Taylor Report—the administration's official after-action review of the Bay of Pigs project, prepared by the Cuba Study Group under the direction of Gen. Maxwell Taylor—declared that



"El jefe maximo" (U)

there can be no long-term living with Castro as a neighbor. His continued presence within the hemispheric community as a dangerously effective exponent of Communism and anti-Americanism constitutes a real menace capable of overthrowing the elected governments in any one or more of weak Latin American republics. There are only two ways to view this threat; either to hope that time and internal discontent will eventually end it, or to take active measures to force its removal.

Or, in the blunter words of Robert Kennedy, "We will take action against Castro. It might be tomorrow, it might be in five days or 10 days, or not for months. But it will come."² (U)

By July 1961, the NSC's Special Group had endorsed that conclusion and stated that the basic American objective toward Cuba was to implement "a US program to develop

¹ Thomas G. Paterson, "Fixation with Cuba: The Bay of Pigs, Missile Crisis, and Covert War Against Castro," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Kennedy's Quest for Power: American Foreign Policy, 1961–1963*, 123–55; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 142 n.; W.W. Rostow (Department of State) memorandum to Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, and Allen Dulles, "Notes on Cuba Policy," 24 April 1961, Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Document Reader*, 16. (U)

² John F. Kennedy, speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 20 April 1961, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 306; "Record of Actions at the 483rd meeting of the National Security Council, 5 May 1961," and Cuba Study Group memorandum to President Kennedy, "Recommendations of the Cuba Study Group," 13 June 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 482, 606; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 181. (U)

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opposition to Castro and to help bring about a regime acceptable to the US." In September, CIA's most valuable Soviet agent, GRU colonel Oleg Penkovskiy, reported that "Khrushchev considers it an accomplishment on his part" that "you [the United States] still tolerate Castro in Cuba." The White House concluded that it must dispel this image of weakness and prove that the Kremlin could not take advantage of it.³ (U)

Domestic politics also was a factor. As a presidential candidate, Kennedy had pledged to take a harder line against communism than Dwight Eisenhower had. During the 1960 campaign, he needled the administration by noting that "[i]n 1952 the Republicans ran on a program of rolling back the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe. Today the Iron Curtain is 90 miles off the coast of the United States." After Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist in May 1961, it was evident that the Bay of Pigs setback needed to be redressed quickly to prevent a pro-Soviet, communist spearhead from penetrating the Western Hemisphere, and to deny the Republicans an issue in the 1962 elections.⁴ (U)

The Kennedy administration soon took overt steps to isolate and weaken Castro. In September 1961, it announced that it would stop sending foreign aid to any country that assisted Cuba, and in December it extended the US embargo on Cuban sugar imports through mid-1962. Judging that reliance on diplomatic and economic measures would be futile, however, and without ruling out the use of massive military force against Castro, the administration in November 1961 decided to develop a more comprehensive and aggressive program to, as an NSC docu-

ment later put it, "help the people of Cuba overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace."⁵ (U)

"Boom and Bang" (U)

The result was a large-scale, interdepartmental covert action program best known by its Pentagon codename MONGOOSE—a sustained campaign of sabotage, propaganda, espionage, and work with resistance networks and exile groups that went far beyond CIA's previous low-grade and sporadic harassment and propaganda activities.⁶ This "command operation," as presidential counsel Richard Goodwin called it, would build on existing activities against Cuba that included developing and maintaining intelligence and resistance cells on the island, broadcasting propaganda from Radio Swan and other facilities, inducing defections from Castro's revolutionary cadre, having Cuban diplomats declared *personae non grata*, sponsoring speaking tours by regime critics, cooperating with expatriate groups to build a credible post-Castro leadership, and recruiting assets and collecting intelligence in third countries. MONGOOSE would be combined with highly compartmented projects to assassinate Castro, separately run military "psyops" activities, and overt efforts to ostracize Cuba diplomatically within the Organization of American States (OAS), damage its economy with trade sanctions, reduce Castro's appeal to Latin America's dispossessed masses by promoting modernization through the Alliance for Progress, and bolster the region's internal security forces with military assistance.⁷ (U)

³ Thomas A. Parrott (NSC) "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group, July 20, 1961," *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 632; Jerrold L. Schecter and Peter S. Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved the World*, 249, citing transcripts of CIA's 33rd meeting with Penkovskiy on 22 September 1961. (U)

⁴ Kent M. Beck, "Necessary Lies, Hidden Truths: Cuba in the 1960 Campaign," *DH* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1984): 37-59, quote at 45. (U)

⁵ Taylor Branch and George Crile III, "The Kennedy Vendetta: How the CIA Waged a Silent War Against Cuba," *Harper's Magazine* 251, August 1975: 50; Richard N. Goodwin untitled memorandum to President Kennedy, 1 November 1961, President Kennedy untitled memorandum to the secretary of state et al., 30 November 1961, and Edward Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 664, 688, 710. On contingency planning for an invasion of Cuba, see James G. Hershberg, "Before 'The Missiles of October,'" *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 163-98. (U)

⁶ Details about MONGOOSE can be found in Samuel Halpern oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Alexandria, VA, 15 January 1988 (hereafter Halpern/McAuliffe OH), and Halpern oral history interview by Brian Latell and Michael Warner, Chantilly, VA, 7 April 1998 (hereafter Halpern/Latell OH); Helms, chap. 19; "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 23 [sic] November 1963," CIA memorandum prepared for the House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, undated but c. 1978, OCA Files, Job 80T01357A (hereafter CIA JFK Assassination Records), box JFK35, folder 7; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 139-48, 333-37; *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, under numerous index entries for MONGOOSE; *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After. A Documents Briefing Book for An International Conference, Havana, Cuba*, numerous documents at tab 7; and secondary sources on MONGOOSE noted in the Appendix on Sources.

⁷ The Kennedy administration's diplomatic efforts to isolate Cuba within the Western Hemisphere can be followed in *FRUS, 1961-1963, XII. American Republics*, 250-355. Its program to shift military aid from collective defense to internal security is described in

and Edwin Lieuwen, *Generals vs. Presidents*, 124-27. Incisive critiques of the administration's Latin American policies are Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, chap. 3; Bruce Miroff, *Pragmatic Illusion*, 111-42; and Stephen G. Rabe, "Controlling Revolutions: Latin America, the Alliance for Progress, and Cold War Anti-Communism," in *Kennedy's Quest for Power*, 105-22. (U)

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The Special Group Augmented (SGA), a slightly expanded version of the Special Group, had overall control of MONGOOSE.⁸ The SGA's chairman was Maxwell Taylor, the president's military adviser, and its other members were McCone; McGeorge Bundy; Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, the JCS chairman; Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense; U. Alexis Johnson, the deputy under secretary of state for political affairs; and Robert Kennedy. Air Force Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, the vaunted counterinsurgency specialist who had devised and implemented covert action programs in the Philippines and Vietnam, was put in charge of MONGOOSE operations. Administratively, the project fell under Pentagon authority,⁹ but it drew on the resources of CIA, the Departments of Defense and State, and the US Information Agency (USIA). CIA's large part was run by a special working group, Task Force W, led by DDP officer William Harvey, of Berlin Tunnel fame, with Richard Helms and McCone above him in the chain of command.¹⁰

The full Special Group usually met on Thursday afternoons at 1400. When it finished its business, Robert Kennedy would come in, and it became the Special Group Counterinsurgency. When MONGOOSE was discussed at the end of the agenda, the SGC—with most of the same people—converted into the SGA. McCone often attended back-to-back meetings of the three groups.¹¹

McCone's attitude toward and involvement in MONGOOSE were directly affected by the project's two driving forces, Robert Kennedy and Edward Lansdale. Kennedy, charged by the president after the Bay of Pigs to accomplish something against Castro, was MONGOOSE's catalyst at the policy level. If anything, he was even more dedicated to deposing Castro than the president, and, as a senior CIA operations officer recalled, "wanted boom and bang all over

the island." "My idea," the attorney general declared in November 1961, "is to stir things up on [the] island with espionage, sabotage, general disorder, run & operated by Cubans themselves with every group but Batistaites & Communists. Do not know if we will be successful in overthrowing Castro but we have nothing to lose in my estimate." Getting rid of Castro, he stated at one of the early SGA meetings, was "the top priority in the United States Government—all else is secondary—no time, money, effort, or manpower is to be spared," and he told the head of the DDP at the time, Richard Bissell, to "get off his ass" and do something about Cuba. "It is untenable to say," he was quoted as telling MONGOOSE project officers, "that the United States is unable to achieve its vital national security and foreign policy goal" toward Cuba. Kennedy sent memoranda and made telephone calls to CIA continually—often bypassing the project hierarchy to contact junior officers and even Cuban exiles directly—and asked for copies of the daily reports from refugee interrogations in Florida. He spent many hours of his work week on the telephone with McCone, Helms, and Harvey, and at Taylor's and Lansdale's offices. He grew frustrated with what he called "half-assed" operations—"just going in, blowing up a mine or blowing up a bridge...some of them ended in disaster. People were captured, tried—and confessed. It wasn't very helpful." Kennedy's mounting impatience and pressure were largely responsible for creating what Helms later called the "white heat" conditions in which "nutty schemes were born." McCone's personal relationship with the attorney general made it all the harder for him as DCI to support the administration's covert campaign while maneuvering to keep CIA from having to shoulder the blame for failure.¹² (U)

Edward Lansdale, as assistant for special operations to the secretary of defense, was MONGOOSE's strategist and visionary. A former advertising executive and OSS officer, he

⁸ On the formulation of the Kennedy administration's covert operations against Cuba, see Goodwin untitled memorandum to the president, 1 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 664; "Types of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime," 8 November 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 3. Well before MONGOOSE was developed and approved, CIA had outlined a project of its own with an estimated cost of [redacted] "Program of Covert Action Aimed at Weakening the Castro Regime," 19 May 1961, and untitled CIA memorandum on covert action in Cuba, undated, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 554-60, 636-37; and *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII, American Republics; Cuba 1961-1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 269-71.

⁹ The decision to make MONGOOSE a military-run project largely appears to have been Robert Kennedy's, with some input from Lansdale. The attorney general—already mad at CIA for the Bay of Pigs—did not appreciate the Agency's skepticism about the project, and Lansdale urged him to ignore the intelligence experts' assessments. Evan Thomas, *Robert Kennedy: His Life*, 149; *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 687. (U)

¹⁰ The "W" in Task Force W stood for William Walker, an American adventurer who led unsanctioned military expeditions ("filibusters") to Central America in the 1850s. Helms, 197. After Task Force W was established, the DDP area divisions coordinated their independent operations against Cuba through it.

¹¹ McCone calendars, entries for November 1961–October 1962.

¹² Samuel Halpern quoted in Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 287–88; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 476; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Meeting with the Attorney General of the United States Concerning Cuba," 19 January 1962, "Memorandum from the Chief of Operations, Operation MONGOOSE (Lansdale) to the Members of the Caribbean Survey Group," 20 January 1962, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuba," 26 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 719–21, 800–801; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 141, 150, 334; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 378–79; Hilty, 424. (U)

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CHAPTER 4



Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale
(U)

While there, he helped mastermind a counterinsurgency operation that quashed communist rebels and brought a pro-Western democrat, Ramon Magsaysay, to power in 1953. After the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Lansdale was sent to Vietnam to try to repeat that accomplishment.¹³ As an exemplar for US intervention in Cuba, Lansdale looked to the American War of Independence:

Americans once ran a successful revolution. It was run from within, and succeeded because there was timely and strong political, economic, and military help by nations outside who supported our cause. Using this same concept of revolution from within, we must help the Cuban people to stamp out tyranny and gain their liberty.

His zeal for deposing Castro approached, if not equaled, that of the Kennedys:

[T]here will be no acceptable alibi.... I appreciate the difficult problems inherent in getting bureaucratic procedures and personnel aroused to do the dynamic thinking and actions demanded by this project. However, I also am very clear about the unreserved requirement laid upon us.... It is our job to put the American genius to work on this project, quickly and effectively. This demands a change from business-as-usual and a

hard facing of the fact that we are in a combat situation—where we have been given full command.¹⁴ (U)

DCI Doubts (U)

McCone had had no direct dealings with Cuban affairs before he became DCI, and his “knowledge base” about Castro’s leadership, policies, and objectives mainly came from Agency briefings and analyses he was given during the period between his appointment and swearing-in. His study of CIA assessments, operational plans, and liaison information led him to have strong reservations about the efficacy of covert action in Cuba. Figuring in his thinking was the judgment of BNE in early November 1961 that “[t]he Castro regime has sufficient popular support and repressive capabilities to cope with any internal threat likely to develop within the foreseeable future.” Castro’s removal “by assassination or by natural causes, would certainly have an unsettling effect, but would almost certainly not prove fatal to the regime. The revolution is by now well institutionalized; the regime has firm control of the country; its principal surviving leaders would probably rally together in the face of a common danger.” Moreover, MONGOOSE potentially conflicted with what McCone saw as his most important early mission as DCI: restoring the Agency’s prestige downtown after the Bay of Pigs. Accordingly, he wanted CIA’s participation in MONGOOSE carefully controlled to minimize damage to the Agency if the project failed. Two covert action disasters in a row were unacceptable.¹⁵ (U)

McCone first presented his cautionary views on MONGOOSE to policymakers at a meeting on 22 November 1961 (a week before he was sworn in) with the president, Robert Kennedy, and Lansdale. After hearing the attorney general express “grave concern” over Cuba and call for

¹³ Lansdale’s exploits in the Philippines made him the model for a memorable literary figure who epitomized the altruistic side of America’s postwar internationalism, Col. Edwin Hillandale in *The Ugly American* (1958). Lansdale is often regarded as the man after whom British author Graham Greene created his naïve yet sinister embodiment of American “imperialism” in Vietnam, Alden Pyle, in *The Quiet American* (1955). However, Greene was writing about Vietnam circa 1952 while it was still under French control and before Lansdale arrived. (U)

¹⁴ Robert Smith Thompson, *The Missiles of October*, 138; “Memorandum from the Chief of Operations, Operation MONGOOSE (Lansdale) to the Members of the Caribbean Survey Group,” 20 January 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba* 1961–1962, 721; Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 196–200, 239–50. The Caribbean Survey Group, the cover name for MONGOOSE’s planning and administrative apparatus, comprised the project officers in the Departments of State and Defense, CIA, and USIA who had day-to-day responsibility for managing the project. (U)

¹⁵ BNE memorandum to DCI Dulles, “The Situation and Prospects in Cuba,” 3 November 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba* 1961–1962, 672. The paper was published on 28 November 1961 as SNIE 85–61 with the same title but a somewhat reworked text. Apropos MONGOOSE, it judged that “[i]n view of the regime’s repressive capabilities...it is highly improbable that an extensive popular uprising against it could be fomented” (4); copies of unreleased estimates are on file in the History Staff. In a memorandum, Lansdale took issue with the SNIE’s conclusions, which he called “the major evidence to be used to oppose your project.” Lansdale untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 30 November 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba* 1961–1962, 687. On McCone’s general circumspection toward covert action, see Carter memorandum to Helms, “Covert Actions,” 16 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4, conveying “the Director’s desire that covert actions conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency must be fully and totally justified as in the national interest and must be limited to objectives of our national policy,” and including this note from Carter to Helms: “Dick: This is designed to be helpful in case you get harebrained ideas coming in from the outside....” (U)

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"immediate dynamic action" that "would embody a variety of covert operations, propaganda, all possible actions that would create dissensions [sic] within Cuba and would discredit the Castro regime, and political action with members of the OAS in support of the action," the DCI urged that the administration not compensate for its current state of "shock" by embarking on a "reckless" course. McCone supported the concept of Lansdale heading an interdepartmental program, but the potential for bureaucratic overreach bothered him. He insisted that "under no circumstances" should Lansdale try to "lift" elements of departments or agencies out of their "in place" position and put them under the new group. CIA components, he argued, could not function properly without direct support from the Agency's logistics and communications complements. McCone won his point, at least for the time being, but he wrote that the attorney general "resented CIA resistance" to the Lansdale project.¹⁶ (U)

While Lansdale was developing his operational program during the next several weeks, McCone tried to dampen what he evidently regarded as excessive enthusiasm for getting rid of Castro by covert means. He pointed out to Robert Kennedy "the very great difficulty of creating an effective internal political resistance to a well-organized, authoritarian regime equipped with a substantial military force and an effective internal security police." As evidence, McCone said that only 12 of more than two dozen agents in Cuba could communicate with the Agency, and that a recent infiltration team was quickly captured and some of its members displayed on a Cuban television "confession show" for propaganda value. He called the SGA's attention to the fact that most Cubans were apathetic, not disgruntled, and that the Cuban leader could rely on a "fanatical pro-Castro minority" and an efficient security apparatus to support him. The DCI had to be careful, however, lest the administration perceive him and CIA as ineffectual or even disloyal. The policy of removing Castro was established, so, operating on the tactical and administrative level, McCone tried to make sure that the Agency supported Lansdale's grandiose plans in

ways that either stood a fair chance of succeeding or that would not embarrass CIA and the administration if they failed. This task was difficult given the Kennedys' ebullience toward covert action and their intense pressure on MONGOOSE operators to produce results quickly.¹⁷ ~~XX~~

The administration's decision to have Lansdale supervise MONGOOSE and run it out of the White House and the Pentagon enabled McCone to keep some bureaucratic distance from the project. He assigned responsibility for CIA's role to Richard Helms, who turned over day-to-day direction of Task Force W to William Harvey. Helms put Harvey in charge of the special working group to remove the whole potentially messy business from the regular DDP chain of command. It was a tactic he had used in previous positions, Harvey's executive officer Sam Halpern recalled, "so when [operations] blew up[,] they didn't blow up in his face. He could see there was no profit whatever for the Agency in this thing [MONGOOSE]." (Perhaps as a signal of his effort at detachment, Helms attended only seven of 40 MONGOOSE meetings.) McCone tacitly assented to Helms's arrangement. Although he shared his DDP's doubts about covert action in general and wanted to be especially cautious—and bureaucratically insulated—in the case of MONGOOSE, McCone still needed to accomplish something, and having the experienced, imaginative, and tireless Harvey run the Agency's part increased the likelihood of that.¹⁸ (U)

Lansdale presented his detailed operational plan in a lengthy memorandum to the SGA on 18 January 1962. MONGOOSE's objective of "bring[ing] about the revolt of the Cuban people" would be accomplished by 32 tasks, to be formulated or under way by the end of February. They included debriefings of refugees, agent infiltrations, cultivation of assets inside Cuba, encouragement of defections, sabotage operations, economic sanctions, and dissemination of propaganda. The Departments of State, Defense, Commerce, and Treasury, as well as CIA, USIA, the FBI, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, would be involved.

¹⁶ McCone memoranda about 22 November 1961 meeting with the president, the attorney general, and Lansdale, and about 29 November 1961 meeting with Robert Kennedy, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 684-87. (U)

¹⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General Robert Kennedy...27 December 1961," J.S. Earman (DCI executive assistant) memorandum about McCone meeting with Robert Kennedy on 11 January 1962, and Parrott, "Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 11 January 1962," *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 700-703

McCone, "Memorandum of Luncheon," folder 1 ~~XX~~

January 16, 1962, "McCone Papers, box 2,

¹⁸ Halpern/Latell OH, 15-16, 18; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 140. (U)

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When completed, the tasks would create "a strongly motivated political action movement" within Cuba that could "capitalize on the climactic moment"—an incident that sparked an angry public reaction, or a fracturing of the leadership cadre—and initiate an open revolt against Castro's regime. The US government also would plan to support the revolt with military force if necessary. The Intelligence Community's most recent assessment that such an approach probably would not succeed—the above-mentioned special estimate of late November 1961—was flawed, according to Lansdale, because it "contain[ed] operational conclusions not based on hard fact." A month later, Lansdale—warning that "[t]ime is running against us" and that the Cuban people "are losing hope fast"—laid out a set of operational target dates in six phases ("Action," "Build-up," "Readiness," "Resistance," "Revolt," and "Final") that posited the establishment of a new government in Cuba during October 1962.¹⁹ (U)

In part owing to McCone's efforts, the momentum for "action" slowed in early 1962. McCone told Robert Kennedy that he found Lansdale's premises and forecasts "extreme in some regards." He specifically cited the criticism of the Cuba special estimate and the claim that CIA had taken upon itself the responsibility for "creating the political climate and plausible excuse for armed intervention," which Lansdale thought was up to the Departments of State and Defense. McCone also questioned whether many of the tasks either could be completed on time or were feasible at all—for example, Lansdale's projection of 155 agents recruited and 85 of them trained by the end of May 1962, and another 100 recruited and 70 of them trained by the end of July. McCone approved the DDP's response to the 16 tasks it was assigned, with the caveat that "the imposition of arbitrary scheduling upon clandestine operations can be used only to prod the participants but not to predetermine results." He also warned the SGA that the Cuban regime might suppress an uprising as brutally as the Soviets had in Hungary in 1956. "In such an event, unless the U.S. is prepared to give overt [military] assistance, future opportu-

nities to unseat the Castro government would be lost." McCone's points apparently registered. On 30 January, the SGA approved Lansdale's first plan, but after reviewing his later six-phase scenario, which presumed success at every stage, it directed him on 1 March to concentrate on intelligence collection during the initial March–May time frame. The SGA would then decide what to do next. Moreover, CIA was given until July to complete its espionage activities in Phase One. President Kennedy approved the revised operational guidelines on 14 March.²⁰ (U)

While Helms and Harvey were scripting CIA's part, BNE produced, over McCone's signature, an updated estimate on Cuba that did not encourage Lansdale and MONGOOSE's advocates and reinforced the DCI's skepticism about the whole covert undertaking. Popular discontent was growing, according to the estimate, but Castro's security forces—improved in part through Soviet Bloc assistance—could contain any widespread resistance. At the same time, Havana was turning more toward Moscow because of its US-engineered expulsion from the OAS in January and the embargo that Washington imposed against it in February. Harvey asked BNE to review its conclusions; it did and saw no reason to change them. Meanwhile, McCone posed some probing operational questions to Helms and Harvey that bespoke his strong reservations about how effectively the Agency could conduct its MONGOOSE activities. Hearing nothing that might make him think the project had some chance of succeeding, he came out vigorously for "more aggressive action[,] including military intervention" at an SGA meeting on 5 April. "Our national policy was too cautious," he contended, especially because aerial photography indicated that Castro's armed forces were not nearly as large and effective as previously reported. When asked whether US military action would not upset regional allies, he replied that "maybe a show of strength would assist us to win friends rather than lose them."²¹ (U)

McCone did not again press the SGA to endorse military intervention in the short term, perhaps because BNE soon

¹⁹ Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, Helms memorandum to McCone, "Meeting with the Attorney General...Concerning Cuba," 19 January 1962, and Lansdale, "The Cuba Project," 20 February 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 710–20, 745–47; *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 279; SNIE 85-61, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 28 November 1961. Lansdale added a 33rd task—incapacitating Cuban sugar workers during the harvest—on 19 January, but it was canceled after it was shown to be unworkable. Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 143. Lansdale had presented a preliminary operations plan to the SGA in early December 1961. The program he proposed the following month was a refined and much expanded version of the earlier one. See *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 691–95. (U)

²⁰ McCone, "Memorandum for the File of Discussion with Attorney General...January 20, 1962..." Lansdale, "The Cuba Project," 18 January 1962, CIA memorandum to the Special Group, "The Cuba Project," 24 January 1962, Parrott memorandum, "Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 25 January 1962," Lansdale memorandum, "The Cuba Project," 2 March 1962, Maxwell Taylor untitled memorandum of guidelines for Operation MONGOOSE, 14 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 718, 722–29, 765, 771–72; Lansdale memorandum to the SGA, "Institutional Planning, Operation Mongoose," 13 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 280. (U)

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judged that a prolonged American occupation probably would be necessary to pacify Cuba. However, Harvey's modest appraisal of the likely accomplishments during Phase One of MONGOOSE would not have dissuaded him from believing that the Agency was headed for trouble, and that the administration consequently should use military force sooner rather than later. On 10 April, Harvey advised him that

The current plan does not constitute and does not permit a maximum intelligence and covert action program against Cuba. The plan is not likely to result in the overthrow of the Castro regime unless followed by extensive additional preparation and action based on a firm decision to use U.S. military force at the appropriate point to destroy the regime.... If a maximum [covert] effort is to be mounted, the decision to use military force must be made *now* and the planning must go forward in phase to permit a concentrated and planned uprising with the immediate support of military forces to prevent its destruction.

On the managerial level, Harvey warned the DCI that unless "the tight controls exercised by the Special Group and the present time-consuming coordination and briefing procedures" were "made less restrictive and less stultifying," his unit would lack the "flexibility and professionalism" needed for "a maximum operational effort against Cuba."²² (U)

The president still had not decided to use military force to overthrow Castro, so planning and training for an invasion—including well-publicized mock amphibious assaults and exercises in Puerto Rico and the southeastern United States—continued during this time. Meanwhile, Phase One of Lansdale's plan moved ahead. As McGeorge Bundy later wrote, MONGOOSE "was not a prelude to stronger action but a substitute for it." If that was the policy, then McCone, never one for half-measures, wanted the covert action done

on a scale and at a speed that would achieve significant results. Lansdale's management of the project, and the limits the SGA put on it, frustrated him. "I was very disagreeable," he wrote after hearing that little had been accomplished during much of April, and urged "more action...a more dynamic effort."²³ (U)

During this time, CIA analysts continued producing assessments that could be interpreted as undercutting the administration's policy. First, they questioned the efficacy of a key weapon against Cuba—economic sanctions. "Economic dislocations and deprivations are unlikely to affect the attitudes of pro- and anti-Castro groups...we do not foresee an economic situation in Cuba during the next two or three years which will be the critical factor in the ability of the Castro/Communist regime to maintain control of the country." In addition, Agency analysts concluded that the Castro regime was far along toward becoming a Soviet-style state and was in no danger of being toppled, largely because active resistance was small and scattered. McCone did not question those judgments or try to steer his estimators toward different conclusions.²⁴ (U)

By late spring 1962, the MONGOOSE principals had settled into a routine of meetings and memoranda writing. McCone, presumably satisfied with Phase One's concentration on developing espionage capabilities, was not as directly engaged as before. He did not hold out any hope that MONGOOSE would soon achieve its purpose, but he did believe that it might induce resentment and disarray in the political leadership or defections in the military. He thought low-level covert actions of the MONGOOSE sort were the most aggressive course the administration could follow at that time. "[D]ynamic action such as mass landings [akin to the Bay of Pigs operation] and a more positive military approach...would face disaster unless U.S. military forces en masse were committed in support of such movement." He did not disagree with Robert Kennedy's observations in mid-July that, so far, MONGOOSE mainly had been useful

²¹ NIE 85-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 21 March 1962, Sherman Kent (Chairman, BNE) memorandum to McCone, "The Internal Situation in Cuba," 6 April 1962, McCone, "Memorandum on Special Group-MONGOOSE Project," 5 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 772-76, 779-82; McCone, "Notes for Discussion with Helms and Harvey concerning MONGOOSE," 16 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 282. (U)

²² Kent memorandum to McCone, "Probable Reactions to a US Military Intervention in Cuba," and Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operation Mongoose—Appraisal of Effectiveness and Results which can be Expected....," both dated 10 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 783-85, 788-89. (U)

²³ Hershberg, 181; McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival*, 416; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuba," 26 April 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 798. (U)

²⁴ DI, OCI Memorandum No. 1265/62, "The Economic Situation in Cuba," 25 April 1962, and idem, unnumbered memorandum, "Cuban Situation," 3 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 798-800, 835-42. (U)

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for intelligence collection and that the situation in Cuba would have to worsen before the United States would take "drastic action."²⁵ ~~XX~~

CIA would covertly support exile groups; recruit, train, and supply resistance cells; sabotage economic targets; disseminate propaganda; and collect intelligence. ~~XX~~

The SGA reached its decision despite McCone's doubts—reinforced by BNE and Harvey—about MONGOOSE's prospects for success without the use of military force. McCone, leery of backlash against the Agency, persuaded the SGA to accept a less robust "CIA variant" to Lansdale's first version of Phase Two. He argued that

a stepped-up B will risk inviting an uprising, which might result in a Hungary-type bloodbath if unsupported. Not only would the U.S. be blamed, but there would also be a high noise level in the press and eventually a situation would be created which would require [military] intervention.... The CIA variant now proposed would...avoid all these dangers because it would not invite an uprising.²⁷ ~~XX~~

Lansdale's synthesis of his original proposal in July and the Agency's modifications gained the SGA's endorsement on 16 August. McCone liked neither the plan nor the decisionmaking process that led to its approval. "The meeting [at which the SGA accepted Lansdale's outline] was unsatisfactory, lacked both purpose and direction and left me with a feeling that very considerable reservation exists as to just where we are going with Operation Mongoose." He did not further oppose the SGA's decision, however, perhaps figuring that because the administration would take "action" in any event, Phase Two was the least unappealing of the probable alternatives. President Kennedy approved the plan on 20 August. The stated objective was "the further containment, undermining and discrediting of the target regime while isolating it from other Hemisphere nations." The

Phase Two of MONGOOSE—"Exert all possible diplomatic, economic, psychological, and other pressures to overthrow the Castro-Communist regime without overt employment of [the] U.S. military"—got underway after the SGA approved Lansdale's operational proposal on 16 August. (Phase Two was also known as "Alternate Course B" because Lansdale listed it as the second of four options for the SGA's consideration; the options ranged from cancelling the project to sending in US troops.) During Phase Two,

²⁵ McCone, memoranda about MONGOOSE operations, 7 May and 20 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folders 1 and 2; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion... July 18, 1962, with Mr. Robert Kennedy," *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 850. ~~XX~~

²⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record—The MONGOOSE Operation," 20 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, "Operation Mongoose—End of Phase I," 24 July 1962, and Lansdale memorandum to SGA, "Review of Operation Mongoose," 25 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 872-84; Judith Edgette, "Domestic Collection on Cuba," *Studies* 7, no. 4 (Fall 1963): 41-45; Giglio, 190-91. HUMINT collection against Cuba before this phase of MONGOOSE was haphazard. See George McManus (Helms's deputy for Cuban affairs) memorandum to Helms, "Cuba—Foreign Intelligence Collection," 4 January 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 4. ~~XX~~

²⁷ Lansdale memoranda to the SGA, "Review of Operation Mongoose," 25 July 1962, and "Alternate Course B," 14 August 1962, McCone, "Memorandum on Meeting of the Special Group, Augmented, to Discuss Mongoose—16 August 1962," Taylor untitled memorandum to the president, 17 August 1962, and NIE 85-2-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 1 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 884, 893-94, 928-36, 940-41, 944-45; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operation MONGOOSE—Future Course of Action," 8 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 289; McCone untitled draft memorandum about MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962, HS Files, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 1; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316. At the same time, McCone argued against Rusk's on-again-off-again idea of using Brazil as an intermediary in a diplomatic approach to Castro that would exploit supposed differences between the Cuban leader and communist hardliners in his regime. McCone insisted that the "previously cited frictions between Castro and the old-line Communists have been resolved in Castro's favor, and no issue currently exists." Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 10 August 1962." See also James Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (Part I)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 3-4, 12-14. ~~XX~~

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intent of MONGOOSE no longer was to overthrow Castro but to "create added difficulties for the regime and...increase the visibility of its failures" through covert activities that would not commit the United States to intervene militarily in Cuba. Intelligence collection remained the priority, with greater emphasis to be given to developing assets in country and sowing disagreement inside the Cuban leadership. Finally, "[w]hile a revolt is not sought at this time, we must be prepared to exploit it should one unexpectedly occur."²⁸ (U)

McCone soon learned that the Soviets were providing more military materiel and personnel to Cuba than ever before. He decided that, before he left on his month-long honeymoon in France, he must try again to persuade the president and the NSC to take an even tougher line against Castro. "[W]ith the passage of time," the DCI wrote starkly in a proposed plan of action,

it is possible there will evolve in Cuba a stronger rather than a weaker Castro-dominated communist state, fully oriented to Moscow, to serve...as a model for similar actions by disciplined groups throughout Latin America, and...as a bridgehead for Soviet subversive activities in Central and South America. Being dominated by Moscow, such a Cuba would also serve as a possible location for MRBMs, for COMINT and ELINT facilities targeted against United States activities...and finally as an ECM [electronic countermeasures] station which might adversely affect our space and missile work.

McCone then advised the administration to take "more aggressive action...than any heretofore considered." Along with a full diplomatic offensive through the United Nations and the OAS to "awaken and alarm" Latin American and the West to the dangers Castro posed, he suggested the "[c]reation of a provocative action against Guantánamo or some other vital United States interest, including possibly a neighboring friendly country...of sufficient proportions and sufficiently provocative to cause instantaneous retaliatory

action on our part." That incident should be followed by "[t]he instantaneous commitment of sufficient armed forces to occupy the country, destroy the regime, free the people, and establish in Cuba a peaceful country which will be a member of the community of American states."²⁹ ~~XX~~

The White House did not agree with McCone's more belligerent approach and, on 23 August, ordered that MONGOOSE "Plan B plus" move forward "with all possible speed." The Departments of State and Defense were directed to study the pros and cons of going beyond "Plan B plus"—for example, imposing a blockade or invading Cuba—should a new Berlin crisis break out. In addition, the United States' NATO allies were to be apprised of "this new evidence of Castro's subservience to the Soviets" and encouraged to limit trade with Cuba. The same day, McCone headed for the Riviera with his new wife.³⁰ (U)

"Covert" Operations Commence (U)

The "boom and bang" phase of MONGOOSE was finally due to get underway after the SGA (minus McCone) received Lansdale's next operational plan on 31 August and approved it two weeks later with slight changes. The plan included 56 "activities" designed to achieve six objectives: discrediting and isolating the Castro regime; harassing the Cuban economy; intensifying intelligence collection; splitting the Cuban leadership and aggravating its relations with the Soviet Bloc; assisting Cuban exile groups and regional neighbors to act against Castro; and positioning the United States to take advantage of an indigenous revolt. The plan tasked CIA with many responsibilities, including supporting diplomatic moves, trade sanctions, and military contingency planning; conducting propaganda and intelligence gathering operations; assisting exile groups; recruiting, training, and supplying resistance and collection cells in Cuba; and launching sabotage missions against Cuban economic targets on and off the island. The first target to be hit was the Matahambre copper mine, the largest facility of its kind in Cuba. Other proposed operations included "encouraging

²⁸ McCone, "Memorandum on Meeting of the Special Group, Augmented, to Discuss Mongoose—16 August 1962," and Taylor untitled memorandum to President Kennedy, 17 August 1962, with covering memorandum dated 20 August 1962 and undated attachment, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 940-41, 944-46. (U)

²⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion in Secretary Rusk's Office...21 August 1962," and OCI Memorandum No. 3047/62, "Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba," 22 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 947-56; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with President Kennedy," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2. McCone's proposed provocation resembled part of an operation the JCS was considering around then. Called NORTHWOODS, the project detailed several invasion pretext scenarios, including sinking a US ship at Guantánamo in a staged "Remember the *Maine*" incident, and "false flag" terrorist attacks in American cities (to be blamed on Cuba). It is not known if McCone knew about the program. "Operation NORTHWOODS," 12 March 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 7, doc. 9 ~~XX~~

³⁰ NSAM No. 181, 23 August 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, X, Cuba 1961-1962*, 947-58; McCone calendars, entry for 23 August 1962. (U)

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destruction of crops by fire, chemicals, and weeds, [and] hampering of harvest by work slowdown, destruction of bags, cartons, and other shipping containers.³¹ ~~XX~~

Task Force W and the CIA base in Miami—codenamed JMWAVE—grew rapidly in size and scope during this phase of MONGOOSE. [redacted]

[redacted] The chief of JMWAVE since early 1962 was Theodore Shackley, a fast-rising DDP officer nicknamed “the Ghost” or “the Blond Ghost.” [redacted]

MONGOOSE accomplished little over the next several weeks while McCone was away, however. Throughout the project’s existence, the administration feared that US-sponsored covert operations, in combination with unauthorized

activities of freelance exiles, might implicate the United States and trigger an uprising in Cuba that would force an American military incursion. The Department of State’s representative on the SGA, U. Alexis Johnson, recalled that while President Kennedy strongly supported MONGOOSE, he often drew back when he had to approve specific operations with “fairly high ‘noise’ levels.” In response to directions from “Higher Authority” (President Kennedy) to rein in the exiles, Acting DCI Marshall Carter in early September told the Agency’s MONGOOSE managers that if they learned that refugee elements were “cooking up an [unsanctioned] operation which could provoke uprisings which would be fruitless and provocative” or result in “a total crackdown,” CIA should “bring its influence to bear to prevent incidents” and avoid “bloody suppression [like that] which occurred in Hungary.” This circumspection took much of the drive out of MONGOOSE. A CIA officer who attended an SGA meeting in mid-September reported that “no decisions were made, no new ideas were brought up, and nothing useful emerged” from the discussion.³² ~~XX~~

Two US-inspired operations were not carried out during September, one because of unforeseen circumstances and the other because of political qualms. In the first instance, an exile team of saboteurs sent to bomb parts of the Matahambre mine ran into a militia unit and withdrew after a brief firefight. (Harvey dryly reported that “the execution of the operation was effective with the exception of the performance of the team itself.”) In the other instance, the SGA decided to interdict a cargo of contaminated sugar bound from Cuba for Eastern Europe. MONGOOSE operatives had tainted the sugar with a drug that would sicken anyone who ate it and, it was hoped, frighten Soviet Bloc countries

³¹ Lansdale memoranda to the SGA, both titled “Phase II, Operation Mongoose,” 31 August and 12 September 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 974–1000, 1057–58; Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, “Operation MONGOOSE—Proposed Sabotage Operation, Matahambre Mine,” 29 August 1962, and Harvey memorandum to Marshall Carter, “Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Operation[,] Matahambre Copper Mine...,” ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5. This phase of MONGOOSE was jump-started on 24 August when members of an exile group that CIA was aiding slipped two boats into Havana Bay and fired on a hotel where visiting advisers from several communist countries were meeting—possibly, it was thought, with Castro. Ten Russians and Cubans were killed. Two weeks later, the same group shelled one British and two Cuban merchant ships north of the island. Raymond L. Garthoff, “The Cuban ‘Contras’ Caper,” *Washington Post*, 25 October 1987: C5. A freighter owned by McCone’s shipping company was nearly sunk in another such attack. After the DCI vented his anger on some deputies, they reminded him that he had been told of the operation and that in the future he should advise his ships to sail clear of possible areas of hostile action. Albert D. Wheelon oral history interview by [redacted] Santa Barbara, CA, 17 October 1998 (hereafter Wheelon/OH), 60. ~~XX~~

³² “CIA Operations against Cuba prior to the Assassination of President Kennedy,” passim; David Corn, *Blond Ghost*, 74–75; Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, *The Fish Is Red*, 113–16; Branch and Crile, “Kennedy Vendetta,” 51–52; “How the CIA Operated in Dade,” *Miami Herald*, 9 March 1975, 1A; Helms, 202ff.; [redacted]

³³ Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power*, 345; Carter memorandum to Helms, Harvey, and Cline, Action Memorandum No. A-39, 7 September 1962, and untitled memorandum, 11 September 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 5; Walter Elder, “Memorandum for the Record...MONGOOSE Meeting of 14 September 1962,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 1067–68. ~~XX~~

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from buying any more of Cuba's chief export. On order from the White House, the US government purchased the cargo and dumped it.³⁴ ~~XX~~

When McCone returned from his honeymoon during the last week of September, he immediately confronted several vexing Cuban developments. Some, such as the continuing construction of Soviet surface-to-air missile sites, the cutback in U-2 overflights of the island, and the policy implications of the special estimate on "The Military Buildup in Cuba" (issued over Carter's signature on 19 September) were related to what would soon become the missile crisis, which will be discussed in the next chapter. At the same time, McCone also addressed MONGOOSE's lack of accomplishments since the SGA approved "Plan B plus" nearly a month before. He found himself caught between criticisms from the White House—particularly the attorney general—that so little was being done operationally and complaints from project officers that the administration's anxiety about deniability was hampering the program. (U)

At first, the DCI—perhaps detecting the same policy-maker ambivalence that had impaired the Bay of Pigs plan—sided with the operators. At a tense SGA meeting on 4 October, he asserted that "hesitancy in government circles" had caused "a lack of forward motion" in the plan. Robert Kennedy "took sharp exception" to that claim and retorted that the SGA had "urged and insisted upon action by the Lansdale operating organization." Instead, only "meager results" had occurred, and now "massive activity" was needed. After a "sharp exchange," the SGA members agreed that Phase Two of the MONGOOSE plan was outmoded, that sabotage operations would be increased, restrictions on attributability of operations would be relaxed, higher levels of "noise" would be accepted, and "new and more dynamic approaches" would be examined. Also, the attorney general said he would take over as chairman of the SGA.³⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone soon began leaning on William Harvey, however, probably because he recognized that the White House was wedded to Lansdale and would back him in any dispute with CIA. The DCI may also have concluded that Task Force W's chief was personally and professionally unsuited

for running CIA's part in MONGOOSE. Harvey had had a brilliant career as a counterintelligence expert and manager of clandestine COMINT projects (most notably the Berlin Tunnel) since coming to CIA from the FBI in 1947. He had little background in Latin American matters or covert action, however, and he lacked the tact essential for dealing with high administration officials. ~~XX~~

The frequent quarrels Harvey had with Lansdale, Robert Kennedy, and SGA chairman Maxwell Taylor were hindering the program. The free-wheeling Harvey had nothing but disdain for Lansdale's military mindset—Task Force W called him the "FM," for field marshal—and complained that the general's demands for meticulous detail were "excruciating." "It went down to



William Harvey (U)

such things as the gradients of the beach and the composition of the sand," according to one of Harvey's deputies. McCone, however, may have reached the same utilitarian conclusion as did George McManus, Helms's special assistant for Cuba: resistance to Lansdale was futile. "General Lansdale is a fact of life—let's live with him," McManus wrote. "In his position, he can be extremely helpful as a friend—as an unfriendly colleague[,] he can influence others to evaluate our performance in a less favorable or even unfavorable light." Moreover, "Lansdale, within the framework of the existing organizational structure, performs a function with which we might otherwise be saddled...Let's begin handling Lansdale from a political point of view rather than from a professional point of view...."³⁶ ~~XX~~

Harvey, the gun-toting career operative, did not like the Kennedy brothers, either, regarding them as espionage fantasists and referring to them privately as "fags" and "those fuckers." McCone may have heard from his friend the attorney general about two exceptional altercations the latter had had with Harvey. During a visit to JMWAVE in early 1962,

³⁴ Harvey memorandum to Carter, "Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Operation[,] Matahambre Copper Mine...," ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 345; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—23 May 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 351–52; [] vol. 2, 250–52. ~~XX~~

³⁵ McCone, "Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting Held on Thursday, October 4, 1962," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 11–13; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 4 October 1962," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18. ~~XX~~

³⁶ Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 289–90; Corn, 82; McManus letter to Helms, 7 September 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 4. ~~XX~~

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Kennedy started to head out the door with a classified Agency cable in his hand. Harvey yelled at him to stop, hurried over, and snatched the paper from his hand. On another occasion, after hearing that an infiltration team was not yet in Cuba because it had not finished training, the attorney general said he would take the operatives to Hick-

ory Hill and train them himself. Harvey asked Kennedy what he was going to teach them—babysitting? Harvey also griped that the SGA's too-frequent requests for reports, briefings, and coordination meetings stifled clandestine activities inside Cuba. "Harvey complains that Taylor never approves anything," Helms told Thomas Parrott, a CIA officer serving as the Special Group's executive secretary. "He [Harvey] goes in week after week and they're all turned down. Can't you do something about this?" For their part, White House officials involved with MONGOOSE thought Harvey was disreputable and unreliable—especially after he returned from an alcohol-laced lunch and fell asleep at a meeting. "Your Mr. Harvey does not inspire great confidence," McGeorge Bundy confided to Parrott.³⁷ (U)

As an SGA member and Harvey's superior, McCone could have intervened on his officer's behalf, but when faced with the choice of responding to White House pressure for "action" and defending an unseemly subordinate, the DCI for a time chose the former. He seemed almost livid after reading a memorandum on sabotage attacks Harvey drafted



A MONGOOSE operations team (U)

a week after the White House demanded "massive activity" against Castro. On his copy of the paper, in a hurried, agitated script, McCone wrote: "This is the poorest plan of action I know... This is merely a 'bugle' operation. I wish one or two or better five or ten operations layed [sic] down at Tuesday's meeting... Totally and

completely disagree with this paper and will not forward as CIA document." Beside specific paragraphs he penciled, "Words... Words... We asked for a plan, not a study... Why not submit[?]. When[?]... More checking, no action... No action here, merely consideration..." and, portentously, "Replace Harvey[.] Put Helms on job more actively." McCone's most notable display of disfavor toward Harvey occurred at a White House meeting during the missile crisis, when Task Force W was told to concentrate on intelligence collection and to stand down from sabotage operations. McCone sat silently while Robert Kennedy, intensely displeased with how little the Cuban operatives had done, launched into a tirade against Harvey that lasted several minutes. McCone may have calculated that it would be better for him and the Agency in the long term to let Harvey take the heat for operational failings while he maintained his own good relations with, and access to, the Kennedys.³⁸ ~~SECRET~~

October 16 proved to be a seminal day in US-Cuban relations. The SGA showed unusual venturesomeness in approving over a dozen sabotage operations against targets

³⁷ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 177, 179; Corn, 82; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 289–90. Other MONGOOSE principals in and out of the White House shared Harvey's sentiment toward Robert Kennedy. Thomas Parrott remembered that "Bob Kennedy was very difficult to deal with. He was arrogant. He knew it all, he knew the answer to everything. He sat there, tie down, chewing gum, his feet up on the desk. His threats were transparent. It was, 'If you don't do it, I'll tell my big brother on you.'" Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 297, citing interview with Parrott. Maxwell Taylor, the head of the SGA until early October 1962, observed, "I don't think it occurred to Bobby in those days that his temperament, his casual remarks that the President would not like this or that, his difficulty in establishing tolerable relations with government officials, or his delight in causing offense was doing harm to his brother's administration." Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 69. (U)

³⁸ Harvey memorandum to Lansdale, "Operation MONGOOSE—Sabotage Actions," 11 October 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; D.J. Brennan memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba," 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA File, doc. no. 62-80750-4186. ~~SECRET~~

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that included a railroad bridge, port facilities, Cuban-registry vessels, a power station, a nickel plant, two oil refineries, an oil tanker from the Soviet Bloc, and—remarkably, given all the previous worry about “noise”—

[redacted] Bundy cautioned that the attacks should not be conducted too efficiently so that they could plausibly appear to have been staged by less competent exile organizations. Later in the day, Robert Kennedy met with MONGOOSE operations officers; Helms attended in place of Harvey. The attorney general passed on the president’s “general dissatisfaction” that MONGOOSE “had failed to influence significantly the course of events in Cuba.” In view of that lack of progress, he said he was going to give the project “more personal attention,” including meeting every morning with the project managers. The reason for this new “push,” Kennedy told Helms, was “the change in atmosphere in the United States government during the last twenty-four hours,” caused by the discovery that the Soviet Union had deployed offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. With that news, Operation MONGOOSE moved into an exponentially more sensitive phase.³⁹ ~~XX~~

Plots to Kill Castro: What Did McCone Know? (U)

CIA was involved in at least eight plots to assassinate Fidel Castro between 1960 and 1965, and in early 1961 the Agency established an “executive action capability” (code-named ZRRIFLE) that included the assassination of foreign leaders. Four plots were formulated and two were initiated while McCone was DCI. In the first, William Harvey worked with John Rosselli, a Mafia figure, who passed on Agency-supplied weapons, munitions, electronic equip-

ment, and poison pills to Cubans who had agreed to try to kill Castro. The planning and preparation took place from April 1962 to January 1963, but the plan was not carried out.⁴⁰ The next two schemes were thought up in early 1963, when Task Force W looked into two unorthodox ideas for assassinating the Cuban leader: rigging a seashell with explosives and depositing it in an area he often went skin diving; and giving him a diving suit with a breathing apparatus contaminated with tuberculosis germs. The former was deemed impractical, and the latter did not go beyond laboratory development. In the fourth instance, Rolando Cubela Secades, a highly placed Cuban official codenamed AMLASH, in late 1963 asked CIA for an assassination weapon after DDP officer Desmond FitzGerald promised him the United States would support a “real coup” against Castro. Cubela had told his Agency contacts that killing Castro was a necessary part of the “inside job” he was planning. CIA, which had been in touch with Cubela sporadically, and usually indirectly, since early 1961, subsequently offered him a poison pen—ironically, on the day President Kennedy was shot—and delivered weapons to him, including a telescopic rifle and a silencer, during the period March 1964–February 1965. The Agency-supplied materiel was not used in attempts on Castro’s life, and CIA terminated contact with Cubela for security reasons in June 1965.⁴¹ (U)

The dispute over how much McCone knew about these plots and about the White House’s general intention to use “executive action” against Castro remains unresolved.⁴² The basic difference arises over whether McCone heard about, or was aware of, the predilection of some administration officials to have Castro killed, or whether he was witting of specific operations. In congressional testimony in 1975,

³⁹ Carter memorandum to the SGA, “Operation MONGOOSE/Sabotage Proposals,” 16 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 11; Parrott, “Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation MONGOOSE, 16 October 1962,” *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18; Helms, “Memorandum for the Record...MONGOOSE Meeting with the Attorney General,” 16 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 45–47. ~~XX~~

⁴⁰ Harvey’s simultaneous dealings with Rosselli and MONGOOSE, and Lansdale’s mention of “liquidation of leaders” in a MONGOOSE memorandum (see below) have led to confusion that the CIA assassination plots were part of the anti-Castro covert action plan. They were not, though in the minds of certain US officials involved in both—for example, Robert Kennedy, Helms, Harvey, and his successor, Desmond FitzGerald—the permanent removal of Castro from the scene certainly would have improved the prospects of the regime change operation. In a historical parallel, some Agency officers witting of the earliest plots to kill Castro, such as Richard Bissell, were so strongly committed to the Bay of Pigs operation because they anticipated that Castro would have been, or would soon be, killed by the time *La Brigada* landed in Cuba. (U)

⁴¹ Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 71, 83–90, 181–89; CIA Inspector General, “Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro,” 23 May 1967, 37–54, 75–106, retrievable in Chief Information Officer/Information Management Staff, Management of Released Information (MORI) database, doc. no. 277331; Howard Osborn (Director of Security) memorandum to Helms (DDCI), “Maheu, Robert A.,” 24 June 1966, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Church Committee, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies* (hereafter *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*), 13–14, 17–20, 77–79; Scott D. Breckenridge (Inspector General) et al., “Comments on Book V, SSC Final Report, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies*,” August 1976, Tab D passim, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 11. Cubela had demonstrated his revolutionary bona fides by assassinating Fulgencio Batista’s intelligence chief in 1956 and seizing the presidential palace before the triumphant Castro entered Havana in 1959. He claimed to have become disaffected over the totalitarian turn in Castro’s leadership. In addition to Agency-instigated plots, Cuban exiles with whom CIA had contact proposed or plotted at least three assassination attempts against Castro of which the Agency was aware. None of these proposals or plots occurred during McCone’s directorship. *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 26–33; George Crile III, “The Riddle of AMLASH,” *Washington Post*, 2 May 1976, Kennedy Assassination clipping file, HIC. (U)

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McCone denied under oath that CIA officials told him about assassination efforts made before he became director, or that he discussed them with President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, or any other senior administration official. No one but Richard Helms has claimed that he personally informed the DCI about plots underway after McCone's confirmation. No documents prove any particular argument, and statements and recollections of officials involved in the plotting lead to different conclusions. Some Agency officers have said they did not apprise McCone of certain projects because the plans were inactive or not ready to be implemented. For example, Richard Bissell, McCone's first DDP, told the Rockefeller Commission in 1975 that he did not inform the new DCI about ZRRIFLE's assassination aspect because it was "in abeyance" at the time McCone took over, and that he did not mention the plots against Castro because "really nothing was happening worth bringing to his attention." Sheffield Edwards, the chief of security who had dealt with the Mafia in plotting during 1960–61, said similarly that "I did not want to drag Mr. McCone into this thing that in my opinion had petered out." William Harvey told the Church Committee that he did not brief McCone on plots to kill Castro because he assumed the DCI knew about them already. He and Helms decided later that they would tell McCone if a given assassination operation moved farther along. For the time being, Helms later explained, they did not inform him of the Mafia activities. "Mr. McCone was relatively new to the organization, and this was...not a very savory effort."⁴³ (U)

Several former administration and Agency officials—including some who were not witting of the plots at the time—have said McCone would not have approved of them because he thought they were morally reprehensible and violated his Catholic beliefs. For example, Harvey testified to the Church Committee that McCone said, "if I got myself involved in something like this, I might end up getting myself excommunicated." Soon after leaving Langley, McCone wrote that "[t]hrough the years the Cuban problem was discussed in terms such as 'dispose of Castro,'

'remove Castro,' 'knock off Castro,' etc."—meaning, he claimed, "the overthrow of the Communist Government in Cuba." He used similar words when testifying before the Church Committee. Helms took issue with that interpretation, suggesting to the committee that McCone could hardly have failed to understand what those euphemisms meant. During the MONGOOSE period, Helms said, "it was made abundantly clear...to everybody involved in the operation that the desire was to get rid of the Castro regime and to get rid of Castro.... [N]o limitations were put on this injunction.... No member of the Kennedy administration...ever said that [assassination] was ruled out...." (U)

Drawing conclusions about McCone's cognizance of the plots to kill Castro is complicated by questions about the quality and reliability of the evidence. Some exculpatory statements come from Agency officers who may have tried to establish "plausible denial" for McCone; who might not have been in positions to know whether he had been told or not; or who concluded that, based on their evaluation of his character, he did not act like he knew about the plots and so must not have known about them. For example, according to Helms, McCone could tell the Church Committee that he did not know about the operations because his former assistant and the Agency's referent to the committee, Walter Elder, might have told him about gaps that existed in the material CIA had provided to the Senate investigation. Because no available documents demonstrated that he was aware of the plots, he could safely deny knowing of them. Samuel Halpern, one of Harvey's assistants on Task Force W, has said that McCone never heard about the AMLASH plot, but Halpern might have been too far down in the chain of command to know if the DCI had learned of it or other assassination schemes from senior administration officials—such as Robert Kennedy. George McManus, Helms's deputy for Cuban operations, opined to the Church Committee that if McCone had been asked to approve an assassination, he "would have reacted violently, immediately"—but McManus said he was not aware of that happening and concluded that McCone did not know of the plots.⁴⁴ ~~SECRET~~

⁴² Sources for this paragraph and the next are: *Spymasters*, 72; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 101–3, 105, 149; McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; transcript of McCone's testimony to the Church Committee, 6 June 1975, 3, 5–7, 44, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities (SSCIA) Records, record no. 157-10011-10052, JFK Assassination Records Collection, NARA. (The body of records hereafter will be cited as NARA/JFK Assassination Records. McCone's testimony will be cited as McCone Church Committee testimony). (U)

⁴³ FBI official Sam Pappich—the Bureau's liaison with CIA—told the Church Committee that after Edwards and Harvey told him about the Mafia plots, he never discussed them with McCone. Andrew Postal memorandum to Charles Kirbow (both Church Committee staffers), "Interview with Sam Pappich [sic]," 25 August 1975, SSCIA record no. 157-10005-10069, box 265, folder 14, NARA/JFK Assassination Records. (U)

⁴⁴ Helms/McAuliffe OH, 4–5; Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, "A Briefing Paper," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 13, 19–20; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 101. ~~SECRET~~

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Other, less provable, factors also need to be considered in evaluating the extent of McCone's knowledge. For example, his friend Robert Kennedy might have told him about such highly sensitive activities going on in his own organization—especially because he had been appointed DCI in large part to prevent operational lapses and failures that would embarrass the White House and needed that foreknowledge to head off “flaps.” Also, McCone's intellectual curiosity and insistence that Agency deputies inform him of potential controversies—so evident in other aspects of his directorship—make it likely that he would have tried to find out, or demanded to be told, about CIA involvement in something as grave as killing a foreign leader once he realized that policymakers had raised it as an option, however extreme. (U)

Most empirical evidence indicates that McCone did not hear about the Mafia plots from the outgoing DCI and DDCI; that at least as early as August 1962, he knew about the inclination of some administration officials to have Castro killed; but that he did not know of any individual operations to accomplish that objective until August 1963 at the earliest. He told the Rockefeller Commission that he had not been briefed on ZRRIFLE, and he testified to the Church Committee that “[d]uring those days it was almost common for one person or another to say, ‘we ought to dispose of Castro’...[b]ut at no time did anyone come to me, or come to other authorities to my knowledge, with a plan for the actual undertaking of an assassination.” His testimony is corroborated by the recollections of other Agency principals, which the Church Committee report summarized in this way:

McCone testified that he did not know about or authorize the plots. Helms, Bissell and Harvey all testified that they did not know whether McCone knew of the assassination plots. Each said, however, that he did not tell McCone of the assassination efforts either when McCone assumed the position of DCI in November 1961 or at any time thereafter until August 1963, when Helms gave McCone a memorandum from which McCone concluded that the operation

with underworld figures prior to the Bay of Pigs had involved assassination. The [CIA] inspector general's report [of 1967] states that Harvey received Helms's approval not to brief McCone when the assassination efforts were resumed in 1962. Harvey testified [that] this accorded with his recollection. On other occasions when it would have been appropriate to do so, Helms and Harvey did not tell McCone about assassination activity. Helms did not recall any agreement not to brief McCone, but he did not question the position taken by Harvey or the inspector general's report. Helms did say that McCone never told him not to assassinate Castro.⁴⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone directly heard that at least one senior administration policymaker interpreted the words “knock off” and “dispose of” literally. The DCI and over a dozen other officials were present at an SGA meeting on 10 August 1962 when the subject of killing Castro was raised—by Secretary McNamara, according to Harvey and Elder. (McCone later said he did not remember who mentioned it, and McNamara did not recall bringing it up.) Either then or within a few days, McCone objected to the idea. “I took immediate exception to this suggestion,” he claimed a few years later, “as the [US government] could not consider such actions on moral or ethical grounds.” However, Harvey, who was present at the SGA meeting, disputed that the DCI said any such thing then. Elder testified that McCone telephoned McNamara after the meeting and told him that “the subject you just brought up...is highly improper. I do not think it should be discussed. It is not an action that should ever be condoned...and I intend to have it expunged from the record.” After receiving a memorandum dated 13 August 1962 from Lansdale that referred to “liquidation of leaders” as part of a MONGOOSE operational plan, McCone said he insisted to McNamara that the document be withdrawn. Later that day, according to Elder, McCone told Harvey that he disapproved of assassination, and Elder conveyed the same message to Helms personally. (Helms testified that he did not recall meeting Elder on this matter.)⁴⁶ (U)

⁴⁵ Elder untitled memorandum about McCone meeting with Rockefeller Commission staff, 17 April 1975, OIG Files, Job 80B00910A, box 25, folder 11; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 92, 94–95, 99–108, 161–66; Donald F. Chamberlain (OIG) memorandum to E.H. Knoche (Director, Office of Strategic Research), “Questions Raised by Mr. John McCone with Director Colby...,” 25 April 1975, and Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, “A Briefing Paper,” ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Elder memorandum to Chamberlain, “Background on memorandum by John A. McCone dated 14 April 1967,” and McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, *ibid.*, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 13, 19–20. McCone explained his understanding of “executive action” to the senators: “an Executive Action Plan in the jargon of the intelligence world means a plan for the removal by any means of an undesirable head of state or senior person in a country. It doesn't necessarily mean assassination. It might mean setting them up on the Riviera with a blonde and a Swiss bank account, but getting rid of them [nonetheless].” McCone Church Committee testimony, 41. ~~XX~~

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The first documented instance of McCone's knowledge of a specific assassination operation—the Rosselli plot of August 1960–May 1961—was in mid-August 1963. After hearing of press reports that linked CIA to Mafioso Sam Giancana, McCone asked Helms for an explanation. The DDP gave him a copy of a lengthy memorandum dated 14 May 1962 from Sheffield Edwards to the attorney general, outlining the Agency's connection with the underworld figure. The document referred only to “the operation,” but Helms wrote to McCone that he assumed the DCI knew what that meant. McCone was relieved to learn that “the operation” had not occurred on his watch and returned the memorandum to Helms without special comment. That this was McCone's first inkling of the gangster plot—as he claimed to the Church Committee—is borne out by Edwards's statement in another memorandum (same date) that “any future projects of this nature should have the tacit approval of the Director of Central Intelligence”—implying that as of the time the memorandum was sent, McCone did not know about the CIA-Cuba-Mafia link. Lawrence Houston, who helped draft the document, told the CIA inspector general in 1967 that normally he would have briefed the DCI at the time, in view of the attorney general's interest, but did not recall doing so. McCone's calendars for May 1962 show that he met with Houston alone and with Helms and Harvey on the 15th, and with Houston and Helms on the 17th, but no accounts of those meetings exist. The inspector general's 1967 investigation likewise found no evidence that McCone knew about the Mafia plots before August 1963. Like the attorney general, McCone had inferred from the first of Edwards's memoranda mentioned above that the gangster operation had ended. However, he did not know then—and no available information shows

that he was informed later—that Harvey had reactivated the plan a month earlier.⁴⁷ ~~✗~~

McCone knew about later reports from Cuban exiles that the Mafia was planning to assassinate Castro. He received a memorandum from Helms in June 1964 on the subject, which was discussed at a meeting of the 303 Committee (the Special Group's successor, which was named for the number of the NSAM establishing it) that month. He discounted the reports, attributing them to “Miami cocktail party chatter.” Other 303 Committee members took them more seriously and stated that the administration should find out all it could about the plans and prevent them from being carried out. Helms's memorandum to McCone said that CIA officers in touch with the exiles had told them that “the United States government would not, under any circumstances, condone the planned actions.” McCone clearly did not think CIA was involved and apparently took no further notice of the reports.⁴⁸ ~~✗~~

McCone's possible knowledge of an anti-Castro assassination plot is suggested in a memorandum by Lansdale about an SGA meeting on 16 March 1962, attended by President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Bundy, Gilpatric, Lemnitzer, U. Alexis Johnson, and the DCI.⁴⁹ Amid a discussion of MONGOOSE operations, the attorney general “mentioned Mary Hemingway [the fourth wife of author Ernest Hemingway], commenting on reports that Castro was drinking heavily in disgruntlement over the way things were going, and the opportunities offered by the ‘shrine’ to Hemingway.” Lansdale said he knew of that and similar reports, “and that this was worth assessing firmly and pursuing vigorously. If there are grounds for action, CIA had

⁴⁶ Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 161–67; Harvey's handwritten annotations to his copy of *ibid.*, reproduced in Gus Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 5 of photograph section; McCone untitled memorandum to Helms, 14 April 1967, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Lansdale memorandum to Harvey et al., “Alternate Course B,” 13 August 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 924–25; McCone Church Committee testimony, 29–34, 37–39. The minutes of the 10 August 1962 meeting do not mention assassination, but the SGA's executive secretary who prepared them, Thomas Parrott, has said that he did not record proposals that were quickly rejected. Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 162–63; Parrott/Warner OH, 14–15. After the meeting, Lansdale inexplicably wrote in a memorandum sent to some of the attendees that “liquidation of leaders” had been discussed. Harvey immediately pointed out to one of Lansdale's deputies the “inadmissibility and stupidity” of using such words, and he had all copies of the paper retrieved. Harvey memorandum to Helms, “Operation MONGOOSE,” 14 August 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: *Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 290. (U)

⁴⁷ Sandy Smith, “CIA Sought Giancana Help for Cuba Spying,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 16 August 1963: 1–2, Kennedy Assassination clipping file, HIC; Helms memorandum to McCone, “Sam Giancana,” 16 August 1963, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 107–8, 132–33, 333; McCone Church Committee testimony, 7–8, 13–14; Edwards, “Memorandum for the Record... Arthur James Balletti et al.—Unauthorized Publication or Use of Communications,” 14 May 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 807–9; Edwards, “Memorandum for the Record... John Rosselli,” 14 May 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK1, folder 10; “Report on Plots to Assassinate Castro,” 67–70; McCone calendars, entries for 15 and 17 May 1962. The most recent examination of the Agency's dealings with organized crime in plots to kill Castro does not address McCone's knowledge of them; see J. Alan Wolske, “Jack, Judy, Sam, Bobby, Johnny, Frank...: An Investigation into the Alternate History of the CIA-Mafia Collaboration to Assassinate Fidel Castro, 1960–1997,” *ICNS* 15, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 104–30. ~~✗~~

⁴⁸ Peter Jessup (NSC), “Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 15 June 1964,” McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record... 303 Committee Meeting—18 June 1964,” *ibid.*, folder 8; Elder untitled memorandum, 5 May 1975, with attachment, “A Briefing Paper,” ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316. ~~✗~~

⁴⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are Lansdale memorandum in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 7, doc. 7, and David Corn and Gus Russo, “The Old Man and the CIA: A Kennedy Plot to Kill Castro?,” *Nation* 272, no. 12 (26 March 2001): 15ff. (U)

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some invaluable assets which might well be committed for such an effort." McCone asked Lansdale if CIA's "operational people were aware of this. I told him that we had discussed this, that they agreed the subject was worth vigorous development, and that we were in agreement that the matter was so delicate and sensitive that it shouldn't be surfaced to the Special Group until we were ready to go...." (U)



Members of *La Brigada* in training (U)

What Robert Kennedy meant by "the opportunities offered by the 'shrine' to Hemingway"—and what McCone made of that comment—are not known for sure, and there are no further references to the matter in McCone's papers or other available documents about Cuban operations. The attorney general may have been referring to the possibility of luring Castro into an ambush at Hemingway's farm outside Havana. The Cuban leader had told Mary Hemingway that he was fond of her husband's work, and he visited the farm—with minimal security protection—in July 1961 while she was there soon after Hemingway's suicide. The "shrine" was a three-story tower, built for the writer as a study, that especially impressed Castro. Edward R. Murrow, who as head of USIA was involved in some Special Group activities, spoke to her about Castro's visit; according to a Murrow letter, he "passed her remarks on to one or two interested parties down here"—presumably NSC or SGA members. When shown Lansdale's memorandum, Theodore Shackley said, "[i]t certainly has the earmarks of an assassination plot," and [redacted] remarked that the docu-

ment was "as close as we're likely to get" to proof of White House knowledge of efforts to kill Castro. (U)

Lastly, no available information indicates that McCone ever knew about the plot by Rolando Cubela Secades (AMLASH) to kill Castro. The DCI testified to the Church Committee that he

had not heard about that operation in 1963, and he told the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1979 that he first learned about it in 1975. On the weekend after President Kennedy was killed in November 1963, Desmond Fitzgerald told Walter Elder that he and an agent had been meeting with Cubela but did not mention offering the Cuban official a poison pen or promising him a specially equipped rifle. Elder may have told McCone about the contacts with Cubela, but as he did not know about the assassination scheme himself, he could not have told the DCI about it.⁵⁰ (U)

Freeing *La Brigada*: Phase One (U)

Concurrent with its assorted endeavors to oust or kill Castro, the Kennedy administration negotiated with *el jefe maximo* to win the release of more than 1,200 members of the Bay of Pigs brigade captured in April 1961.⁵¹ Robert Kennedy said in 1964 that "we wanted to do whatever was necessary, whatever we could, to get them out. I felt strongly about it. The President felt strongly about it."⁵² The political limits on the White House's humanitarian instincts soon

⁵⁰ McCone Church Committee testimony, 58–59; McCone deposition to House Select Committee on Assassinations, 17 August 1978, Los Angeles, CA, 12, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11; Scott D. Breckinridge (Deputy IG) letter to William G. Miller (Staff Director, Church Committee) with attachment, "AMLASH Operation," 10 July 1976, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 9; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 307; Church Committee, *Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy*, 69–78. (U)

⁵¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Thomas G. Smith, "Negotiating with Fidel Castro: The Bay of Pigs Prisoners and a Lost Opportunity," *DH* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 59–86; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 468–69; Haynes Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs*, 229–46, 279, 282–93, 303–6; Néstor T. Carbonell, *And the Russians Stayed*, 185–89; [James B. Donovan,] "Chronology—The Bay of Pigs," undated but c. September 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5; McCone, "Discussion with Robert Anderson, 23 July 1962," and transcript of telephone conversation between McCone and James B. Donovan, 26 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9; Victor Andres Triay, *Bay of Pigs: An Oral History of Brigade 2506*, 133–35; "Cuba Invaders Given 30 Years; Castro Sets \$62 Million Ransom," *New York Times*, 9 April 1962, 1, and "Cuban Trial Holds 1179 for Ransom," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1962, A1, Bay of Pigs clipping file, HIC; "Cuba Prisoner Deal Rumored," *Washington Evening Star*, 20 August 1962, A-1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 1, HIC. (U)

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became clear, however. Castro's initial proposal to swap the prisoners for 500 tractors or an equal value in dollars fountained in a storm of opposition from American politicians, citizens, and newspapers, who regarded the trade as a surrender to blackmail. An ostensibly private committee formed to negotiate an agreement—its members were educator Milton Eisenhower, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and labor leader Walter Reuther—disbanded in frustration. (U)

In early 1962, as the prisoners' trial approached, the administration quietly began investigating other ways to free them. That task was made harder because Congress had enjoined the executive branch from supporting any prisoner exchange financially, and the president had publicly abhorred the idea that "men were put on the block." After the prisoners were sentenced to 30 years of hard labor, Castro proposed releasing them for a ransom of \$62 million. The Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War, the organization representing the prisoners' interests in the United States, countered with an offer of \$26 million in agricultural products. Castro stuck to the higher figure but released 60 sick and wounded prisoners for a promised payment of almost \$3 million.⁵³ Robert Kennedy then recommended to the committee that it form a fundraising group with James B. Donovan as its spokesman. Donovan was the well-connected New York lawyer who had recently arranged the trade of Soviet spy Rudolph Abel for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers. Donovan was assured that he would not be accused of violating the Logan Act, which forbade US citizens from engaging in unauthorized private diplomacy, and agreed to work *pro bono*. The committee proceeded to solicit sponsors, and on 26 June announced that it had secured support from several dozen prominent personages in business, labor, education, religion, and the arts.⁵⁴ (U)

At this point, McCone's responsibilities as DCI and his business and political connections converged to establish him as a liaison between the administration, the fundraisers,

CIA's congressional overseers, and corporate executives. Over the next several months, McCone held many discussions with them in several cities on the politics and terms of the release agreement. Unlike most conservative Republicans, he supported negotiating with Castro over the prisoners. He based his view on humanitarianism, a feeling of American obligation to *La Brigada*, the pragmatic need to maintain good relations with the Cuban exile community, the hope of creating an opening for gaining the freedom of nearly two dozen Americans—including three Agency officers—in Cuban jails, and concern that Castro would use prisoners as pawns in disputes with the United States. McCone wanted to drive a hard bargain, as he did not want the "ransom" to help the Cuban regime stabilize itself or leave the administration vulnerable to charges that it "sold out" to Castro. He thought that if a fundraising effort by private citizens gained momentum, the US government might find a way to make up the difference—possibly in kind with food and medicine. After hearing that an anxious Donovan would not accept Castro's invitation to talk unless he had some assurance of support from the administration, the DCI persuaded the NSC principals to encourage Donovan to negotiate firmly with the expectation that Congress could be prevailed upon to lift the ban on using CIA funds for ransom. Donovan then accepted Castro's offer to visit Havana by the end of August 1962. Before he left on his honeymoon to France, McCone established an Agency task force, codenamed MOSES, to provide covert support for Donovan's discussions; designated [redacted] the assistant general counsel, as Donovan's case officer; and ordered that he be kept fully informed about the mission while he was away.⁵⁵ ~~SECRET~~

McCone had scarcely settled in on the Riviera when Acting DCI Carter cabled him that "Donovan is back from Havana with new price list from Fidel": \$3 million in cash and \$25 million in food and medicine, with all details to be settled within 10 days. McCone offered to return to Washington early to help lobby congressional leaders to allow the

⁵² White House aide Richard Goodwin recalled President Kennedy saying, "They [the Cuban Brigade] trusted me, and they're in prison now because I fucked up. I have to get them out." Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice From the Sixties*, 186. (U)

⁵³ Since the prisoners' capture, CIA had paid support money to their dependents in the United States; by mid-1962, the payments exceeded [redacted]. Dependents of the several dozen prisoners released in April 1962 continued to receive the benefits until the men's medical treatments were finished. The families were then placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare as political refugees. [redacted] vol. 2, 244; McCone memorandum to the president, "Payments to Dependents of Cuban Brigade Members," 20 July 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-528, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 28. ~~SECRET~~

⁵⁴ Kennedy declared his refusal to negotiate at a press conference on 11 April 1962; see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, 1962, 321. The roster of sponsors that the Cuban Families Committee developed included Richard Cardinal Cushing, archbishop of Boston and a Kennedy family friend; Princess Lee Radziwill, sister of the First Lady; Gen. Lucius D. Clay, former military governor of Germany; James Farley, a Democratic Party luminary; former senator and New York governor Herbert Lehman; Dame Margot Fonteyn, the ballerina; television celebrity Ed Sullivan; and David J. McDonald, president of the United Steel Workers of America. Robert Kennedy opposed using covert CIA money as contributions to the committee's fund; McCone did not disagree with him. McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the Attorney General... July 3, 1962," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, X, *Cuba 1961-1962*, 842. (U)

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use of Agency funds if necessary, but Carter replied that the White House had not yet committed itself to the latest terms. Once back in the United States in late September, the DCI urged the president and the attorney general to pursue the deal. President Kennedy wondered whether the situation could be put off until after the elections, but McCone said time was running out and that at least exploratory talks should continue. Kennedy then told McCone to brief former President Eisenhower. If he reacted favorably, then McCone was to raise the issue with the Republican leadership and members of the CIA oversight committees while the White House did the same with congressional Democrats. Kennedy directed the DCI to portray the negotiations to Eisenhower as a CIA matter; "the president should not be put in the foreground." The general listened to McCone and agreed to support the initiative. Around this time, McCone received BNE's judgment that Castro was serious about negotiating, and that he would benefit politically from accepting a ransom for the prisoners.⁵⁶ ~~XX~~

The DCI and Donovan then worked out the terms of a pharmaceuticals-for-prisoners swap: \$62 million worth of medicine at Cuban retail prices, or about \$25 million wholesale in the United States, to be purchased by special arrangement from several American drug companies at cost, or about \$20 million. (Medicine was regarded as preferable to food because it was cheaper and easier to ship, and Castro needed it more.) Donovan, Agency officers, bankers, and corporate lawyers held a flurry of meetings, the upshot of which was that by early October, CIA transferred [redacted]

[redacted] CIA never

intended to release the money; it was to serve only as indemnification for the drug firms' bills of lading that Donovan would present to Castro as evidence of performance. Donovan left for Havana on 3 October with the "unofficial" US offer. By this time, McCone doubted whether the Cuban leader would accept the all-drugs proposal.⁵⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone and the administration confronted a potentially damaging political complication at this phase of the negotiations. In mid-September, Donovan had accepted the Democratic nomination to seek Republican incumbent Jacob Javits's Senate seat from New York. Republicans charged that Donovan was using the prisoner release for political gain. Donovan's case officer, [redacted] recalled the high-level concern. "John McCone was beside himself about this. The attorney general was beside himself. How can we be working with this guy, he's running for office, he's on this very secret kind of thing, we don't want US government involvement in this thing, how can we control him?" McCone kept close watch on Donovan's campaign to see if any hint of official involvement in the prisoner discussions came out. According to [redacted]

I was in Philadelphia one morning with Jim Donovan and I got a call about 7:00 in the morning from John McCone saying, "Okay, what did he say? Did he say anything? What is he going to do today?" John was just...very, very concerned about this whole thing. He could see...that if the press decided to make a story of this, it would implicate the electoral process, the Government involvement trying to manipulate [sic]—it was a mess.

⁵⁵ Harvey memorandum to McCone, "American Prisoners in Cuba," 10 April 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 19; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Attorney General...July 3, 1962," "Memorandum of Discussion...July 18, 1962, with Mr. Robert Kennedy," untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 21 August 1962, and memorandum for the file, "Discussion in Secretary Rusk's Office...21 August 1962," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, X, *Cuba 1961-1962*, 842-43, 850-51, 946, 949; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Robert Anderson (former secretary of the treasury) on 2 July 1962, Donovan on 26 July 1962, and U. Alexis Johnson on 22 August 1962, McCone memorandum about discussion with Anderson on 24 July 1962, Ray Cline (DDI) memorandum to McCone, "Estimate of the Effect of Any Decision by the U.S. Government to Pay the \$62,000,000 Ransom of Cuban Prisoners," 23 July 1962, [redacted] "Memorandum for the Record...Conversations with James B. Donovan," 31 August 1962, E. Henry Knoche, untitled Action Memorandum No. 5-21, 31 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Donovan, 21 August 1962, *ibid.*, folder 11; McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Attorney General...24 September [1962], Subject 'Donovan Negotiations,'" *ibid.*, box 2, folder 3; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 307-8; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 353. Besides [redacted] the other members of Operation [redacted] were its head, General Counsel Lawrence Houston; George McManus of the DDP's Cuban Task Force; and [redacted] Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 353; [redacted] memorandum to Chief, Signal Center, "Subject: [redacted]" OGC 62-2029, and [redacted] memorandum, "Subject: Donovan," 28 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 9. [redacted] knew Robert Kennedy from a Catholic retreat for lawyers they had attended a few years before. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 236. Nothing in the documentary record indicates that McCone knew about Kennedy's earlier attempt to use criminal elements, with an undercover CIA officer as a go-between, to make a deal with Castro for the prisoners. *Ibid.*, 178. ~~XX~~

⁵⁶ [redacted] McCone memoranda of meetings with Robert Kennedy, 24 September 1962, with President Kennedy, 25 September 1962, and with Eisenhower, 26 September 1962, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 3; BNE memoranda to McCone, "Cuban Prisoner Ransom Deal," 27 September 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-738, Job 84B00443R, box 5, folder 5. ~~XX~~

⁵⁷ McCone memoranda of discussions with Donovan on 27 and 29 September 1962 and Eisenhower on 3 October 1962, and transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Donovan, 25 September 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-738, Job 84B00443R, box 5, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359. ~~XX~~

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To help keep the negotiations with Castro confidential, McCone told Javits about Donovan's role as representative of a private effort, but he did not divulge the US government's interest to the senator. When Donovan's talks with Castro reached a highly sensitive stage, and with CIA so heavily involved, McCone told Robert Kennedy that he "would take all, or his full share of responsibility" if the settlement failed and a political controversy ensued.⁵⁸ ~~XX~~

Castro made a stiff counterproposal: the quantity of medicine was to be determined by much lower Cuban wholesale prices. That change would significantly increase the amount of drugs needed to make up the proposed value, raising the potential cost significantly and forcing the administration to inform congressional leaders. McCone, along with Legislative Counsel John Warner and General Counsel Lawrence Houston, quickly briefed—and lobbied—the chairmen of the CIA subcommittees, the Senate majority and minority leaders, and other senior legislators. Their reaction ranged from full support to outright opposition, but most of them approved of the administration's approach, with qualifications. On White House instructions, McCone flew to Miami on 7 October to meet Donovan at a safehouse. (For security reasons, he and his four CIA colleagues were the only passengers on a specially chartered commercial flight.) He listened to a rambling discourse from an ill and fatigued Donovan and left more convinced than before that the deal would not come off. A whirl of meetings and airflights followed. After a stopover in Washington to brief the president, McCone flew to New York to see the attorney general [redacted]

Back

in Washington, McCone heard Vice President Johnson say he would support the agreement only if his patron in the Senate, Richard Russell, did.⁵⁹ ~~XX~~

Despite some congressional dissent and the likelihood of political backlash from critics of "appeasement," President Kennedy on 10 October directed the negotiations to proceed. Serious snags had developed by then, however. The *New York Herald Tribune*—apparently drawing on leaks from Cuban exiles and the pharmaceutical industry—embarrassed the administration with a story describing the deal. Probably to take advantage of the bad publicity, Castro became less cooperative and decided that the price he would pay for the medicine should be reduced by over one third. On hearing that, Donovan walked out of their meeting, wrote a message asking the Cuban leader to indicate when he was ready to bargain again, and left for Miami.⁶⁰ ~~XX~~

Finally, the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba several days later forced the administration to put the negotiations on hold. McCone was surprised to learn from a [redacted] official that Donovan—his walkout and instructions from Washington notwithstanding—had told [redacted] that an agreement was imminent. If definitive news of secret talks with Castro came out then, the DCI told Robert Kennedy, the public reaction could be severe and make resolving the missile situation harder. He advised that all discussions about the prisoners be suspended, [redacted]

The president approved McCone's recommendations. The fate of the Bay of Pigs prisoners—and perhaps even of the Castro regime—would have to await the outcome of the missile crisis.⁶¹ ~~XX~~

⁵⁸ McCone, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with Mr. Donovan...September 29, 1962..." memorandum of discussion with Eisenhower, 3 October 1962, and "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 314; [redacted] oral history interview by [redacted] 12 January and 23 February 1998 (hereafter [redacted] OH), 30–31. ~~XX~~

⁵⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with Senator Kuchel and Mr. Halleck..." "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with Senators Mansfield and Saltonstall..." and "Summary Memorandum of Discussions with Congressional Leaders on the Donovan Project," 8 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; McCone memorandum of meeting with the president, the attorney general, and others on 9 October 1962, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 354–58; "Memorandum of Agreement" between the Government of Cuba and the Cuban Families Committee, undated but c. early October 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 3. ~~XX~~

⁶⁰ McCone, "Memorandum on Donovan Project," 11 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 317–18; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359–60; [Donovan,] "Chronology..." undated but c. December 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2). Besides the *New York Herald Tribune*, other major American newspapers were on the story. The *Washington Post* ventured in one headline that "Part of Ransom Cash for Castro Is Expected to Come from CIA" (11 October 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 1, HIC) ~~XX~~

⁶¹ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 359–60. ~~XX~~

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Into the Cuban Crucible (II): The Missile Crisis (U)

In about April 1962, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev decided to develop Cuba into a nuclear missile base, and, by mid-summer of that year, Moscow had begun the buildup of forces and materiel that would culminate in the Cuban missile crisis, the famous "Thirteen Days" of October 1962. This deployment and the US government's reaction to it would constitute for John McCone and the Kennedy administration—indeed, for all Americans—what the president referred to in his first State of the Union address as "the hour of maximum danger."¹ (U)

"No episode in the history of international relations," historian John Lewis Gaddis has noted, "has received such microscopic scrutiny from so many historians" as the Cuban missile crisis.² These studies, as well as works by journalists and former officials, concentrate on the activities of the White House and the Departments of Defense and State, with CIA being mentioned frequently and DCI McCone occasionally. Most treatments of McCone and the missile crisis emphasize his forward-leaning early warning to the administration that the Soviets probably planned to install offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba, and his post-crisis "I told you so" posture that strained relations with senior officials and reduced his access to the White House. While McCone may have demonstrated the tack a DCI should take when he disagrees with his analysts, one historian recently concluded that "[McCone's] discrepant judgment holds no interesting general lesson for intelligence assessment and hardly seems worth the attention it has received."³ There is much more to the story than McCone's augury, however. McCone's interaction with policymakers, his contributions to their decisions, his leadership of the Intelligence Community, and his efforts to cope with charges of intelligence failure would

reshape his role and the role of intelligence in the Kennedy administration and define it in unintended ways in the administration that would unexpectedly follow. (U)

Prelude to Crisis (U)

The Soviet Union had been supplying conventional arms to Cuba since the summer of 1960, but by early 1962, when Khrushchev was close to making his fateful decision, the pace of shipments had slackened. Still, by May, the growing frequency of rumors in Miami's emigré community of a Soviet military buildup had given cause for heightened vigilance. Despite an extensive array of assets targeted at Castro's regime—including CIA collection teams and technical operations, US military intelligence sources and FBI assets, twice-a-month U-2 flights, official and nonofficial third-country sources, and travelers—the Intelligence Community could not substantiate hundreds of reports, dating to before mid-1960, of large, shrouded shapes, stringent security measures, and strange nocturnal activities by European-looking foreigners. (U)

In fact, implementation of Khrushchev's decision was underway by mid-July 1962, with the introduction of sophisticated defensive weapons—surface-to-air missiles and guided missile patrol boats, among others.⁴ After that came medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs), launchers for intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), and more bombers. US intelligence services detected the stepped-up military shipments in mid-1962, almost as soon as they had begun. As a result, refugee debriefing was broadened and

¹ The new president, steeling the country for the time when, as he said in his inaugural address, "the trumpet summons," stated to Congress and the public a few weeks later that "[n]o man entering upon this office...could fail to be staggered upon learning...the harsh enormity of the trials through which we must pass in the next four years. Each day the crises multiply. Each day their solution grows more difficult. Each day we draw nearer the hour of maximum danger, as weapons spread and hostile forces grow stronger.... The tide is unfavorable. The news will be worse before it is better." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 22–23. (U)

² John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 260. The spate of books, articles, and collections of essays on the crisis published since 1990 bears out Gaddis's observation. See the Appendix on Sources for references to them and other publications consulted for this work. (U)

³ Walter Elder provided a nearly hour-by-hour account of the DCI during the missile crisis in his 1973 unpublished manuscript, "John McCone as DCI." Peter S. Usowski, a former Agency officer, examined McCone's actions in the context of intelligence and policymaking in "John McCone and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 547–76. See also James J. Wirtz, "Organizing for Crisis Intelligence: Lessons from the Cuban Missile Crisis," *ICNS* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 133–39, 144–45. The quotation is from James G. Blight and David A. Welch, "What Can Intelligence Tell Us About the Cuban Missile Crisis, and What Can the Cuban Missile Crisis Tell Us about Intelligence?" *ibid.*, 6. (U)

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accelerated, U-2 coverage—already increased earlier in the year, owing to McCone's unease about the earlier buildup—was extended to ships offloading at Cuban ports, and “cratology,” the analysis of shipping packages, was applied to the acquired images. McCone told Arthur Lundahl, the head of NPIC, to check all HUMINT reports about the shipments from every source against high-level photography and to disseminate the findings to the community. (U)

Throughout the summer, US policymakers and intelligence officials speculated about the meaning of the buildup. Many thought Moscow was demonstrating its commitment to, and possibly exerting greater control over, the Castro regime while bolstering Cuba as an outpost for communist subversion in Latin America. An estimate (NIE 85-2-62) issued on 1 August 1962 concluded that although “[b]y force of circumstances, the USSR is becoming ever more deeply committed to preserve and strengthen the Castro regime...[it] has avoided any formal commitment to protect and defend the regime in all contingencies.” The Soviets “have sought to create the impression that Cuba was under the protection of their missile power,” but they “would almost certainly never intend to hazard their own safety for Cuba's sake.” The community's consensus was that Moscow's actions in Cuba were basically defensive, designed mainly to shore up a revolutionary ally while marginally improving its own political position in the region.⁵ (U)

McCone was virtually alone in concluding that the Kremlin had more malevolent intentions. He first conveyed his concern about a potential Soviet offensive threat at a meeting of the NSC's Special Group Augmented—Robert Kennedy, Dean Rusk, Maxwell Taylor, Roswell Gilpatric, and McGeorge Bundy—on 10 August. He had made his judgment after reviewing aerial photographs and clandestine reports. These had included reports on Soviet weaponry from GRU agent Oleg Penkovskiy and sightings made by Cuban agents on the island. McCone held firm even though four complete photographic mosaics could not corroborate the HUMINT and DDI Ray Cline and BNE chairman Sherman Kent disagreed. McCone later suggested his businessman's intuition enabled him to evaluate *possibilities* and did not confine him, as intelligence analysts were, to relying on known facts to assess *probabilities*. After the crisis, McCone's fears were deemed high prescience, but Taylor later said no one at that early meeting acted surprised at the idea, which almost certainly already had been discussed in the national security bureaucracy as a low-probability event that would have severe consequences. (McCone's critics would later fault him for not raising his views with USIB, where he might have been able to sell his argument to others.) Nevertheless, the administration could not act on the DCI's intuition without proof. All the president's advisers in the SGA could do with McCone's judgment was not to dismiss it and be ready to reconsider if evidence warranted.⁶ (U)

⁴ USIB report, “The Military Buildup in Cuba,” 11 July 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 621–24; CIA, Current Intelligence Memorandum No. 3047/62, “Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba,” 22 August 1962, *ibid.*, 950–53; Richard Lehman (OCI) memorandum to McCone, “CIA Handling of the Soviet Build-up in Cuba, 1 July–16 October 1962,” 15 November 1962 (hereafter Lehman Report), 1, 3, 23–24, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18; CIA memorandum, “Phasing of the Soviet Military Deployment to Cuba,” *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 535–37; Dino Brugioni, “The Cuban Missile Crisis—Phase I,” *Studies* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1972): 1–51; Thaxter L. Goodell, “Cratology Pays Off,” *Studies* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 1–10. (U)

⁵ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 80–81, 87–88; NIE 85-2-62, “The Situation and Prospects in Cuba,” 1, 5; McCone meeting with the president on 22 August 1962, Ernest R. May, Philip D. Zelikow, and Timothy Naftali, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises*, 3 vols., Volume I, July 30–August 1962, 600–602. *The Presidential Recordings* corrects a few erroneous attributions of McCone's words to Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric or Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon (or vice versa) made in Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*. The changes do not affect our understanding of what McCone thought or did during the crisis. “Cratology” was the term applied at the time to the study of the exteriors of shipping containers (e.g., their size, shape, composition, and markings) to determine their contents. See Goodell, cited above. The Soviets' elaborate effort to conceal their missile deployment in Cuba is described in James H. Hansen, “Soviet Deception in the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Studies* 46, no. 1 (2002): 49–58. Beginning in 1954, the Intelligence Community identified each Soviet NIE by a three-part numerical code, with the geographic subject area first, followed by the topic of the estimate and the year in which it was produced. Estimates on the Soviet Union, for example, bore the geographic designator 11. The numbers assigned over the years to the principal topics were 1 for space, 2 for atomic energy, 3 for strategic air defense, 4 for military policy, 5 for economics, 7 for politics, 8 for strategic forces, 14 for general purpose forces, and 15 for naval forces. Thus NIE 11-8-62 concerned Soviet strategic forces and was disseminated in 1962. Donald P. Steury, ed., *Intentions and Capabilities: Estimates on Soviet Strategic Forces, 1950–1983*, xxi–xxii. (U)

⁶ “Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba,” 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; McCone, “Memorandum...Soviet MRBMs in Cuba,” 31 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 13; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 87–88; Walter Elder oral history interview by Mary S. McAuliffe, Rosslyn, VA, 19 October 1989 (hereafter Elder/McAuliffe OH3); *Conversation with McCone*, 29. “The prospect of the USSR locating medium-range missiles in Cuba,” BNE wrote on 10 August, “is slight.” BNE memorandum attached to McCone untitled memorandum, 10 August 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 6. Administration officials—presumably trying to justify their actions (or lack thereof) during the late summer and early fall—later claimed, wrongly, that they were not aware of McCone's suspicions. In 1965, Robert Kennedy said, “I never heard about it [the DCI's assessment], and I used to see him [McCone] all the time.... It was certainly never communicated to the President.” He added that if the DCI had been so concerned, he would not have gone ahead with his honeymoon in September. Also in 1965, former presidential speechwriter Theodore Sorensen wrote, “[McCone's] absence on a honeymoon prevented his views from reaching the President.” The attorney general's posthumously published memoir of the crisis, altered by Sorensen, included the statement that “No official within the government had ever suggested to President Kennedy that the Russian buildup in Cuba would include missiles.” Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 506; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 670; Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 27–28; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 419. (U)

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The administration's inaction bothered McCone, and he continued to press his judgment. McCone thought the administration should at least energize its covert action plan against Castro in light of the August NIE's conclusion that internal forces would not topple Castro, the evident Soviet buildup, and the link he presumed existed between Soviet actions in Cuba, Berlin, and elsewhere. He again made his case for a Soviet nuclear missile deployment at meetings with the president and senior Defense and State officials during 21-23 August, arguing that the latest intelligence on Cuba indicated that, among a few other possibilities, the Soviets were setting up SAM sites. The DCI later recounted what he thought that development implied:

The obvious purpose of the SAMs was to blind us so we could not see what was going on there. There they were with 16,000 men with all their ordnance equipment[,] and then came the ships. There was nothing else to ship to Cuba but [offensive] missiles. That was my argument. We didn't see the missiles. They were on the ships and we had no agents on the ships. We really didn't know what was on the ships, but some things you can deduce. That was one of them.⁷ ~~(S)~~

McCone's suspicions that the still-undetected SAMs were intended to protect offensive missile sites may have been reinforced by information from [redacted]

[redacted] just back from Cuba, told McCone on 22 August that he had seen no fewer than 4,500 Soviets and large quantities of Soviet military materiel and speculated that the buildup was intended to quell an anti-Castro uprising. [redacted]

[redacted] did not mention missiles, but McCone no doubt took the first-hand observations of an intelligence professional as corroboration that something drastic was afoot. The DCI

quickly passed on the intelligence to the president, Rusk, McNamara, Taylor, Bundy, and Gilpatric. ~~(S)~~

If the SAMs were not there "to protect Cuban cane cutters," as McCone said, why were they there? He thought Khrushchev, behind the façade of crude bluster, was a risk-taking strategist who had made a dangerous but rational move to right a strategic imbalance. When McCone put himself in Khrushchev's place to explain Soviet behavior in Cuba, he may have had in mind the Intelligence Community's first estimate of Soviet strategic forces during his tenure (NIE-11-8-62, "Soviet Capabilities for Long-Range Attack," approved on 6 July), which argued that US strategic superiority over the USSR had widened since the "missile gap" myth was dispelled the year before. McCone argued that the Soviet leader was responding to US nuclear superiority by putting MRBMs aimed at the United States in Cuba and saying, "Mr. President, how would you like looking down the barrels of a shotgun for a while[?] Now, let's talk about Berlin. Later, we'll bargain about your overseas bases." McCone doubted Khrushchev would deploy such missiles inside Warsaw Pact territory "for fear the local people would...fire them on Moscow." Cuba, on the other hand, "was the only piece of real estate that the Soviets controlled where they could put a missile that could hit Washington or New York but couldn't hit Moscow." The DCI was so anxious about the possibility that he told the attorney general privately that he would "readily compromise our missile bases in Italy and Turkey...[or] our Berlin situation rather than see Cuba develop into a viable Communist state and a potential national threat.... Cuba was the key to all of Latin America; if Cuba succeeds, we can expect most of Latin America to fall."⁹ (As the missile crisis worsened, McCone lost his willingness to make such concessions.) ~~(S)~~

McCone's interpretation of Khrushchev's motives was one of several policymakers and observers would advance as

⁷ "Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; McCone untitled memorandum, 21 August 1962, "Memorandum...Soviet MRBMs in Cuba," 31 October 1962, and "Memorandum for the File: Discussion in Secretary Rusk's office...21 August 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; idem, "Memorandum of the Meeting with the President...on August 22, 1962," and "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...Subject: Cuba," 23 August 1962, ibid., box 6, folder 2; Lehman Report, 4, 6; Schechter and Deriabin, 331, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988. The presence of the SAMs was not confirmed until U-2 photography taken on 29 August showed eight sites on the western half of the island. ~~(S)~~

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the crisis developed or in retrospect. These explanations included: Khrushchev was gauging Kennedy's will to resist and picked Cuba as the testing ground; he was diverting Western attention from designs on his real target, West Berlin; he was protecting his newest client state, Cuba, from American aggression and Maoist enticements; and he was seeking to overcome US strategic superiority by establishing a nuclear outpost near US territory. Most reliable evidence now suggests Khrushchev primarily was trying to accomplish the latter two purposes and was not directly engaging in diplomatic extortion, as McCone suspected.¹⁰ (U)

In late August 1962, the DCI's judgment sounded like a worst case scenario at best, an unfounded hunch at worst, and it might have been discounted because of his widely known, visceral distrust of the Soviet Union. After hearing McCone's dismal forecasts, the JCS reviewed contingency plans for attacking and invading Cuba, and the president requested analyses on the political, military, and psychological impact of surface-to-air or surface-to-surface missile deployments in Cuba, and a study of the possibility of removing US missiles from Turkey. Otherwise, the administration concluded that the available intelligence did not merit a more assertive response. Clark Clifford of PFIAB later described McCone's warnings as "highly emotional and impressionistic" and criticized him for not pressing the community to substantiate them—for example, by ordering more reconnaissance flights. R. Jack Smith, at the time head of OCI in the DI, thought McCone's analysis was faulty in overlooking a key psychological factor: the mentality of the Soviet apparatchik. The Kremlin's military machine was producing large numbers of SA-2s and planting them all over the country, including in places that made no military sense. "It looked as though they had them to give out like

candy, and that tended to indicate they were putting SA-2s into Cuba. It would make the Cubans feel great."¹¹ (U)

McCone found his case harder to make because of headline-grabbing allegations by Kenneth Keating, the Republican senator from New York and an ardent critic of the administration's policy toward Castro, that the Soviets had built missile installations and placed thousands of technicians in Cuba. Keating made over two dozen public statements on the subject from late August to mid-September. He urged President Kennedy to act quickly, proposed that the OAS investigate the situation, and attacked the administration for concealing the Soviet moves from the American public. Keating's alarmist but authoritative-sounding assertions provided fodder for GOP candidates in the congressional campaigns then getting underway and inclined administration officials to discount intelligence that tended to corroborate them. McCone asked Keating, a political friend, to reveal his sources so USIB could better plan reconnaissance flights. The senator refused, possibly because he thought government investigators would try to track down his sources. Years later, McCone described the awkward position he felt his bold conclusion had left him in: "[T]he whole Kennedy administration was opposing me, all Democrats. Here I was[,] the sole Republican with a very different view. I had a devil of a time to persuade the President and his brother...that I was not the source of information to a Republican senator [Keating]."¹² At the time, McCone privately speculated that Keating's sources were either refugees trying to force the administration into rash action, or members of the US Seamen and Longshoremen's Union who had heard details about the Soviet cargoes shipped to Cuba. Afterward, however, he said that he concluded the senator had no sources and "was just using an Irishman's intuition."¹³ (U)

⁹ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 105; Schechter and Deriabin, 332, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988; Walter Elder's comments at CIA symposium on the missile crisis, Langley, VA, 19 October 1992, videotape in the History Staff; *Conversation with McCone*, 23–25; [redacted] 69–70. McCone's comment exemplified what one scholar later called the "gains that justify the risks" explanation for Khrushchev's decision. Two postcrisis analyses by CIA reached the same judgment about Khrushchev's geopolitical motive, but later research has found that he was more interested in protecting Castro's revolution and acquiring leverage to get the US missiles in Turkey removed. ORR, "Cuba 1962: Khrushchev's Miscalculated Risk," 13 February 1964, ER Files, Job 81B00401R, box 1, folder 4; DDI Research Staff, "The Soviet Missile Base Venture in Cuba," 17 February 1964, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 6. ~~XX~~

¹⁰ Richard Ned Lebow, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Reading the Lessons Correctly," *Political Science Quarterly* 98, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 434–36; James Blight and David Welch, *On the Brink*, 226–96; Len Scott and Steve Smith, "Lessons of October: Historians, Political Scientists, Policy-Makers, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Affairs* 70, no. 4 (1994): 667. (U)

¹¹ McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...Subject: Cuba," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; NSAM No. 181, 23 August 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–62*, 957–58; Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 190; Clifford, 357; Ranelagh, 395–96, citing interview with Smith on 23 July 1983; Smith's comments at the above-cited CIA missile crisis symposium. (U)

¹² Thomas G. Paterson, "The Historian as Detective: Senator Kenneth Keating, the Missiles in Cuba, and His Mysterious Sources," *DH* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 67–70; Roger Hilsman, *The Cuban Missile Crisis: The Struggle Over Policy*, 39–43; Thomas G. Paterson and William J. Brophy, "October Missiles and November Elections: The Cuban Missile Crisis and American Politics, 1962," *JAH* 73, no. 1 (June 1986): 95; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 112–14, 170–72; *Conversation with McCone*, 30. (U)

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McCone was preoccupied with personal affairs or out of the country as crucial intelligence, especially aerial photography of SAM sites, arrived during September. On 23 August, he left Washington to prepare for his marriage on the 29th to Theiline McGee Pigott—widow of industrialist Paul Pigott, a friend of the late Mrs. McCone, and a college classmate of his—at her home outside Seattle. Immediately



McCone and his second wife, Theiline, at their wedding (U)

after, the newlyweds left to honeymoon on the French Riviera and did not return to the United States until 23 September. Had McCone been in Washington, he might have swayed policymaker assessments of Soviet intentions. Having made his case early and been drowned out by the overwhelming chorus of the intelligence and policy communities, however, he went about his private business. One of his last official actions before leaving was to request more low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba.¹⁴ (U)

While McCone was away, he heard of several important developments concerning Cuba. On 31 August and 4 September, Sen. Keating and his colleague Bourke Hickenlooper declared that the Soviets had sent missiles and torpedo boats to Cuba. Also on the 4th, after receiving Khrushchev's private assurances that offensive missiles would not be placed there, President Kennedy announced that SAM sites and more Soviet military personnel had been detected on the island and warned Moscow against deploying offensive missiles. (He repeated the warning on the 13th.) At about the

same time, restrictions were placed on Air Force U-2 flights because one flown by a Nationalist Chinese pilot had been brought down by a SAM over the PRC on the 8th and the Soviet Union had protested an accidental U-2 overflight of Sakhalin Island on 30 August. The restrictions limited aerial reconnaissance over Cuba to a few peripheral and "in-and-out" flights by CIA-piloted U-2s. On the 13th, the president declared that if "at any time the Communist buildup in Cuba were to endanger or interfere with our security in any way...or if Cuba should...become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies." One week later, by an 86-1 vote, the Senate passed a resolution sanctioning the use of force to defend the Western Hemisphere against Cuban aggression or subversion; the House did the same on the 26th by a 384-7 vote. Meanwhile, community departments worked on creating a full picture of Soviet activities in Cuba, producing numerous summaries and assessments derived from aerial photography, refugee and agent reports, [redacted] and shipping information. On the 21st, DIA received reports of "a first-hand sighting" nine days before of "a convoy of 20 objects 65 to 70 feet long which resembled large missiles." Still, no reliable intelligence confirmed the presence of offensive missiles. Unbeknownst to anyone in Washington, the first MRBMs had arrived at the port of Mariel on the 15th. (Their warheads were not delivered until 4 October.)¹⁵ (U)

During the next several weeks, McCone kept in touch with Headquarters through a series of transatlantic messages later dubbed the "honeymoon cables." (After receiving the latest of the DCI's frequent communications, an officer in the Agency's cable section joked that "I have some doubts that the old man knows what to do on a honeymoon.") CIA's day-to-day response to events devolved upon DDCI Carter, who attended meetings at the White House and

¹³ "Minutes of the 507th Meeting of the National Security Council," 22 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 154; DCI morning meeting minutes, 1 February 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; *Conversation with McCone*, 30; Schechter and Deriaban, 331-32, citing interview with McCone on 29 August 1988. Richard Helms was certain that Keating got his intelligence from Cuban expatriates—in particular, a weekly digest published by the Cuban Student Directorate. "I went into his charges in detail because my ass was being roasted every day on what Keating was using for his information. You know senators can get away with that." Helms memorandum to McCone, "Background of Senator Keating's Statements on Soviet Missiles in Cuba," 19 November 1962, National Security Files, Countries, box 53, Cuba/Subjects/Senator Keating's Statements, JFK Library; Schechter and Deriaban, 330, citing interview with Helms on 8 December 1988. One of Keating's GOP Senate colleagues, Bourke Hickenlooper of Iowa, said a few months after the crisis that "I had the same information...basically it came from Cuban refugees...." Paterson and Brophy, 98. Keating would only say that his information was "furnished or confirmed by Government sources." "My Advance View of the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Look* 28, 3 November 1964: 96-106. For a somewhat speculative case that Keating got his information from two former ambassadors, Clare Boothe Luce and William Pawley, who had contacts with dissident Cuban exiles, see Max Holland, "A Luce Connection," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 136-67. McCone and Luce were good friends, but there is no indication that she told him anything she might have heard from the exiles about the missiles. One student of the missile crisis suggests (without evidence) that McCone, dissatisfied with what he regarded as the administration's ineffectual response, leaked information about the Soviet military buildup to congressional Republicans and journalists to build pressure on the White House and the Department of State to act more aggressively. Thompson, *The Missiles of October*, 162-63. (U)

¹⁴ *Seattle Times*, 29 August 1962, and Pigott Family press release, 29 August 1962, McCone clipping file, HIC; McCone calendars; Lyman Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables...Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," n.d., *CMC Documents*, 39. (U)

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briefed administration officials and congressional leaders. Carter received McCone's regular missives repeating his prior arguments but, besides mentioning news of SAM sites and missile boats detected during a U-2 mission on 29 August, offered no new evidence to substantiate his predictions. The Acting DCI, in turn, notified McCone of new intelligence, Republican pressure on the president, Cuban exile operations, and Soviet propaganda statements.¹⁶ (U)

Carter kept McCone well informed, but his handling of the Cuban issue thoroughly displeased the DCI—so much so that, according to McCone's executive assistant, Walter Elder, McCone considered firing his deputy.¹⁷ McCone thought Carter had made three serious mistakes or misjudgments: not forwarding the "honeymoon cables" to the White House; not trying hard enough to override Secretary of State Rusk's objections to extended U-2 overflights (the secretary worried about another shootdown); and approving a soon-to-be notorious SNIE that said the Soviets were unlikely to put offensive missiles in Cuba because they never had done so outside their own territory and had little to gain by putting them so close to the United States now.¹⁸ ~~SECRET~~

In his 20 September cable to Carter—the one that took on the greatest significance in crisis postmortems—McCone suggested that "most careful consideration" be given to the SNIE's conclusion that deploying offensive missiles "would

indicate a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in US-Soviet relations than the Soviet Union had displayed thus far...." "As an alternative," the DCI wrote, "I can see that an offensive Soviet Cuban base will provide [the] Soviets with [a] most important and effective trading position in connection with all other critical areas[,] and hence they might take an unexpected risk in order to establish such a position." Implicit in McCone's argument was the judgment that Khrushchev would not have attempted such a brazen move without a plan for backing away from a confrontation or pulling out the missiles once he had achieved his diplomatic objectives. In short, the US government could react vigorously without risking a military confrontation.¹⁹ ~~SECRET~~

Between the lines of the cable, McCone was all but directing Carter to withdraw the SNIE and recast its conclusions, although he did not go farther to risk a "politicization" controversy. Carter offered several explanations for his actions. In France, McCone did not have access to the all-source intelligence available at Headquarters. There were still many reasons for questioning his analysis, and no compelling reason for accepting it. "[T]he entire atmosphere [at the White House] during this period was to maintain as low a noise level as possible," Carter recalled. In that atmosphere, pressing for expanded overflights was pointless. Lastly, as acting DCI, Carter was responsible for deciding

¹⁵ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chap. 13; Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chap. 9, and Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, chaps. 3–4, give good descriptions of the emerging intelligence picture. The problematic U-2 flights are described in "Reds Charge New U-2 Violation," *Washington Evening Star*, 4 September 1962, "Red China Asserts It Brought Down Nationalists' U-2," *New York Times*, 10 September 1962, and "Chiang's U-2 Felled Over Eastern China," *Washington Post*, 10 September 1962, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, box 1, HIC; White House discussions about the errant 30 August mission are in "Meeting on U-2 Incident," *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 5–16. The changes in aerial reconnaissance procedures are reviewed in undated maps of U-2 missions over Cuba during August and September 1962, Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "White House Meeting on 10 September 1962 on Cuban Overflights," 1 March 1963, and "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, *CMC Documents*, 1–2, 61–62, 127–37; and [DDCI executive assistant] memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Genesis of White House Meeting on 10 September [1962]," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 1054–55. The DIA report is paraphrased in *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 1083. It was subsequently accepted as the first definitive intelligence that MRBMs were in Cuba. (U)

¹⁶ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 97; Carter's activities in *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 34–50, 54–58; McCone's cables to Carter dated 7, 10, 13, 16, and 20 September 1962, and Carter's cables to McCone dated 4–8, 10–14, 17–19, and 21 September 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 10, and (with redactions) *CMC Documents*, 45–60, 63–69, 75, 77–90, 95–98. (U)

¹⁷ The principal sources for the following paragraphs are: "Chronology of DCI's Position Re Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 11; Lehman Report, 12–13; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 11; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 7; Krock, *Memoirs*, 379. ~~SECRET~~

¹⁸ The infamous estimate was SNIE 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 19 September 1962. Its key judgments are in *CMC Documents*, 92–93, and the full text is in *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 1070–80. Sherman Kent explains how and why BNE reached its conclusions in "A Crucial Estimate Relived," in Donald P. Steury, ed., *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates: Collected Essays*, 173–87. Useful examinations of intelligence analysis during the missile crisis, with specific reference to the SNIE, include Klaus Knorr, "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," *World Politics* 16, no. 3 (April 1964): 455–67; Roberta Wohlstetter, "Cuba and Pearl Harbor: Hindsight and Foresight," *Foreign Affairs* 43 (1965): 691–707; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chaps. 13–14; Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chap. 9; Walter Laqueur, *A World of Secrets*, 159–70; and Willard C. Matthias, *America's Strategic Blunders*, 177–83. Gil Merom, "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate: A Methodological Perspective," *ISNS* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 48–80, is a withering critique of how BNE framed its arguments and evaluated the available evidence. The authors of the SNIE, principally BNE Chairman Sherman Kent, did not take into account that the Soviet Union had placed MRBMs in East Germany for a few months three years before, the first time it put nuclear weapons beyond its borders. Matthias Uhl and Vladimir I. Ivkin, "Operation Atom," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 12/13 (Fall–Winter 2001): 299–306; "Geheimoperation Fürstenberg," *Der Spiegel*, 17 January 2001: 42, 44, 46. (U)

¹⁹ Roger Hilsman has added the following useful point to the debate over the SNIE that makes McCone's perspective less supportable: "When intelligence analysts predict without qualification that the other side *will* take a belligerent action, they force a policy decision. In effect, they preempt the policymakers. They *cannot* make this kind of estimate, and they *never* make this kind of estimate unless the evidence is totally overwhelming," Hilsman, *Cuban Missile Crisis*, 57–58 (emphasis in original). To personify Hilsman's point: McCone, functioning as both the president's intelligence officer and as a national security adviser, *could* be so venturesome; Kent, in his sole role as the Agency's senior estimator, *should not* have been. (U)

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what material to include in reports to the White House and what estimates to release under the auspices of USIB.²⁰ ~~XX~~

Their clashing personalities aside, the underlying problem between McCone and Carter was a reflection of the DCI's character: he could delegate responsibility but not authority. As Elder later put it, "McCone was of two minds here. One, I'm on leave...He's a big boy, and he has to run this thing.... [B]ut McCone never let go of the reins." Despite their differences, McCone left the issue with Carter and did not try to run around him by contacting members of USIB. Adding to the difficulty of the situation, Carter and senior Agency analysts continued to disagree with McCone's judgment about the offensive missiles and saw no reason to circulate reiterations of his still-unfounded speculations outside of Headquarters. According to Elder, "there was a strong current in the Agency that this Director was completely off base and that the best thing we could do was [ignore him] until it went away." Consequently, Carter showed only the first honeymoon cable to Bundy and passed the others only to Sherman Kent. "I don't recall any action evolving from those cables, nor can I visualize any action that we should have taken in the light of [them,]" he said later. Moreover, Carter did not mention McCone's analytic differences with Agency estimators to any policymaker, presumably surmising, correctly, that repeating the DCI's view without additional evidence would persuade no one downtown.²¹ ~~XX~~

When McCone returned, he found a large intelligence gap, which he quickly set about filling. He was incensed to learn of the restrictions on aerial reconnaissance of Cuba and that Carter had not told him of the change in overflight policy on 10 September. Moreover, a streak of bad weather had left the western end of the island unphotographed for a month. According to Arthur Lundahl, when McCone saw a

map showing the limited coverage during his honeymoon, "[he] nearly came out of his chair." He took on Rusk and McNamara directly at a tense Special Group meeting on 4 October, objecting "strenuously" to the overflight restrictions. Subsequently, the Special Group approved flights based on more reliable HUMINT reports of dubious Soviet activities in western Cuba. The slowness with which missile-related intelligence was processed also irritated McCone. After looking at photographs of a Soviet ship taken nearly two weeks before, he remarked, "How in the hell did the Navy get them to Washington—by rowboat?" At another time, he shook his head on hearing some dated information, saying that by then it was history, not intelligence.²² ~~XX~~

In the meantime, McCone encountered the same skepticism and political concerns at the White House that had prevailed a month earlier. Bundy doubted the Soviets would place offensive missiles in Cuba, and when the DCI showed President Kennedy photographs of crates in Havana harbor that looked as if they contained parts for medium bombers, the president focused on the impact leaks of the information would have on the November elections and the potential that congressional critics, such as Sen. Keating, would have more substantiation of charges that the administration was refusing to tell the public about Soviet missiles in Cuba. (Keating claimed on 10 October, for example, that he had information that the Soviets were constructing six IRBM bases in Cuba.) The president directed that this latest intelligence not be disseminated beyond the White House. McCone replied that several community components had it already, and that it would be reported in CIA's daily bulletin the following morning. At the president's request, the DCI agreed that the story would be worded "to indicate a probability [that bombers had been deployed] rather than an actuality because...we only saw crates, not the bombers themselves." Kennedy wanted all future information on the

²⁰ Carter memorandum to McCone, "Overhead Reconnaissance of Cuba," 21 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18. ~~XX~~

²¹ Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 19–20; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables [redacted]. Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," *CMC Documents*, 40; E. Henry Knoche memorandum to McCone, "CIA Responses to your cables [redacted] 7 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 12; Carter-Knoche OH, 2–3; E. Henry Knoche, "Intelligence Won One in Cuba," *IJIC* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1991–92): 469–70. McCone also was annoyed that Carter had forgotten to tell him that, at President Kennedy's direction, sensitive information on the missiles was being handled in a special compartment called [redacted]. After he was told about the SAMs in early September, the president said he "wished [the information] put back in the box and nailed tight." The intelligence was later released to working-level analysts in the PSALM channel. Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Action Generated by DCI Cables...Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," undated, *CMC Documents*, 39; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 174. ~~XX~~

Time did not mellow McCone's harsh evaluation of his DDCI. Years later, he said that Carter "just sat on his duff and didn't do anything about anything." McCone/McAuliffe OH, 22. ~~XX~~

²² McCone/McAuliffe OH, 4; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 139, 159–60, 168, 172–73; Elder/McAuliffe OH3; McCone memoranda, "Soviet MRBMs in Cuba," 31 October 1962, and "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Knoche untitled memorandum to McCone, 31 October 1962, *ibid.*, box 1, folder 1; Lehman Report, 23–25, 30–31; James Q. Reber (Chairman, USIB Committee on Reconnaissance) memorandum to Carter, "Historical Analysis of U-2 Overflights of Cuba," ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; Hilsman, *Cuban Missile Crisis*, 39–40. CORONA satellites were operational by this time, but the intervals between launches, poor film resolution, and unpredictable cloud cover over Cuba made the system useless during the missile crisis. ~~XX~~

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Soviet build-up “suppressed,” but McCone said doing so would be “extremely dangerous.” After further discussion, they decided that such intelligence would be disseminated just to members of USIB, with instructions that they provide it only to officers responsible for preparing analyses for the White House.²³ (U)

McCone had been back in Washington barely two weeks when a personal tragedy pulled him away again. His stepson, Paul Pigott Jr., was killed in a race car crash in California on 14 October. Just in from a weekend on the West Coast when they heard the news, McCone and his wife flew to Los Angeles the next day and took Paul’s body to a funeral service and burial in Seattle. While McCone was away, Carter—presumably at the DCI’s behest, in his informal capacity as Agency liaison to the Pentagon—tried to have reversed a White House decision on 12 October giving the Air Force control of U-2 missions over Cuba. The White House supposed that if a U-2 were shot down, CIA’s cover story

_____ would be less convincing than the Department of Defense’s _____

_____ Carter unsuccessfully fought to retain CIA command and control of the U-2 flights at least for a few weeks. Remarking that the immediate turnover was “a hell of a way to run a railroad...perfectly obviously a geared operation to get SAC in the act,” he talked to senior Air Force and administration officials to get it revoked. McGeorge Bundy dismissed the dispute—“the whole thing looks to me like two quarreling children”—and McCone (who had opposed the turnover on the grounds that the overflights were national intelligence collection and within CIA’s jurisdiction) relented, telling Carter, “If that’s the way they’re going to run the railroad, let them run the goddamn thing.”²⁴

The infighting, bad weather, and a slow-moving bureaucracy delayed the first U-2 mission under the new reconnaissance schedule until 14 October. The flight traversed western Cuba and brought back photographs of what NPIC analysts determined were three MRBM launch sites in the San Cristobal region. DDI Cline passed the momentous news to Bundy on the evening of the 15th. Bundy told the president the following morning. Speaking over an open line to McCone in Seattle early on the 16th, Elder told the DCI, “That which you and you alone said would happen, has happened.”²⁵ (U)

The “Knot of War” Tightens (U)

During the most intense period of the missile crisis, 16–28 October, McCone attended more than two dozen meetings with the full NSC, the Executive Committee or “ExComm” (the core group of NSC members and outside advisers that met continually through the crisis), one of several ad hoc study groups broken out of the ExComm to deal with specific topics, and the president himself.²⁶ It was the most grueling episode of McCone’s directorship—a frantic marathon of 16-hour-plus workdays filled with urgent discussions and telephone calls, hurried limousine trips, briefings and corridor conferences, meals on the run, political frustrations, bureaucratic wrangles, and social commitments (fulfilled to avoid arousing suspicion before President Kennedy revealed the crisis to the world on 22 October), all conducted under the pall of looming nuclear war. McCone can be seen in some photographs of ExComm meetings in the Cabinet Room at the White House, either sitting at the far end of the large conference table on the president’s right under the portrait of George Washington, or giving a briefing while standing next to an easel holding NPIC imagery boards. (His morning intelligence updates, sometimes conducted with Ray Cline and Arthur Lundahl, were held in such a solemn ambience that some ExComm members

²³ McCone, “Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. McGeorge Bundy...,” 5 October 1962, and “Memorandum on Donovan Project,” 11 October 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 13–15, 17–18; *Presidential Recordings: JFK*, II, 361, 364, 381–82. (U)

²⁴ *New York Times*, 14 October 1962, and CIA press release, 15 October 1962, DCI Records, Job 80M01009A, box 7, folder 105; McCone calendars; Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance*, 207–9; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 162–67; Carter memorandum to Bundy, “Command and Control Responsibility for Cuban U-2 Reconnaissance,” 13 October 1962, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 3; Norman Polmar, *Spyplane: The U-2 History Declassified*, 187–89; Sanders A. Laubenthal, “The Missiles in Cuba, 1962: The Role of SAC Intelligence,” paper prepared for US Air Force, SAC, May 1984 (declassified 1999), 16–17; Carter’s memoranda and transcripts of telephone conversations in ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 18.

²⁵ CIA memorandum, “Probable Soviet MRBM Sites in Cuba,” 16 October 1962, Carter untitled memorandum, 17 October 1962, and Cline, “Memorandum for the Record...Notification of NSC Officials of Intelligence on Missile Bases in Cuba,” 27 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 140, 145, 151; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 187–217; Elder, “McCone as DCI (1973),” 366. At another time, Elder recalled saying, “That which you always expected has occurred.” McCone was not informed about the missile sites on the 15th because no one in CIA told Elder about them until the next day. The DCI spoke to Robert Kennedy about the missiles on the morning of the 16th and returned to Washington later in the day. In his absence, Carter, Cline, Arthur Lundahl of NPIC, and missile expert Sidney Graybeal from the Office of Scientific Intelligence briefed senior administration officials. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 219; _____ 384; McCone meeting schedule for 17–23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 157–58; meetings at the White House on 16 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK*, II, 397–468. (U)

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referred to them as “saying grace.”) The DCI also attended other ExComm meetings held in a second-floor room in the White House, and in the under secretary of state’s conference room at the main Department of State building.²⁷ (U)

McCone’s activities during this period can be tracked through documentary material and transcripts of secretly recorded White House meetings. During the summer, President Kennedy had had the Secret Service install a concealed taping system in the Cabinet Room. Only a handful of people other than the president knew about it: his personal secretary, the two Secret Service agents who installed and maintained the system, Robert Kennedy, and possibly presidential aides Kenneth O’Donnell and Dave Powers. McCone’s voice on the tapes, rising above the cracking and hissing, usually sounds flat and authoritative; occasionally it is opinionated or argumentative. The DCI later said he believed his role on the ExComm was to inform it of day-to-day intelligence developments without advocating particular policies. That reflection was not entirely accurate, for in the early days of the crisis, he not only provided intelligence updates but also argued for a forceful military response. He usually offered his opinion only when asked, however, and after a few days, as consensus formed around the quarantine,

he did not try to change anyone’s mind. Only occasionally, late in the crisis, did he join in policy discussions.²⁸ (U)

The details of McCone’s activities during the crisis can be best understood in the context of his overall perspectives on nuclear weapons and Soviet strategy. His early suspicion of Soviet intentions and his advocacy of a military response to the deployment of offensive missiles generally can be attributed to his views on and experience with nuclear diplomacy. McGeorge Bundy has remarked that McCone “was a believer in nuclear superiority and in the high cost of losing it.”

[He] shared with Khrushchev a great belief in the political utility of nuclear weapons.... He did sincerely and deeply believe that there was reason to attend closely to nuclear balance, to worry about the other man’s deployments and possible deployments, and generally to conduct one’s self as if a marginal change in the nuclear arms race was a highly important matter. That was his mind-set. He was therefore very well equipped to understand Khrushchev. The rest of us [in the administration] in a way were not.²⁹ (U)

²⁶ The members of the ExComm—McCone called them “the high-priced help”—included Robert Kennedy, Theodore Sorensen, Dean Rusk, Under Secretary of State George Ball, Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin, Robert McNamara, Roswell Gilpatric, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze, Maxwell Taylor, and Secretary of the Treasury C. Douglas Dillon. Occasional attendees included Vice President Lyndon Johnson, UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, presidential assistant Kenneth O’Donnell, USIA Director Donald Wilson, former ambassador to the Soviet Union Llewelyn Thompson, and former US government officials Dean Acheson and Robert Lovett. The president formally established the ExComm on 22 October. NSAM No. 196, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 157; Allison, 133. The metaphor in the section title comes from Khrushchev’s letter to Kennedy on 26 October 1962 that signaled the Soviets’ interest in a peaceful resolution:

...we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose. Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot....

FRUS, 1961–1963, VI, Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges, 157. (U)

²⁷ A sense of comedy occasionally arose amid the tension that gripped the ExComm. McCone remembered an occasion when most of the ExComm members packed themselves into one vehicle to avoid newsmen. “We were pushed into the car like the clowns at the circus.” After making the comparison at a meeting soon after, “[w]e were all having a good laugh when it suddenly dawned on me, ‘What a wonderful target for an assassin—all of the government leaders in one car.’” From then on, he said, ExComm members drove separately to meetings in personal or unmarked official vehicles. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 300–301. (U)

²⁸ McCone meeting schedule, 17–23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 157–58; McCone calendars, entries for 17–28 October; Allison, 208; *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, xvii–xviii, xlix–l, and CD-ROM that accompanies the book set; *Conversation with McCone*, 27; Timothy Naftali, “The Origins of ‘Thirteen Days,’” *Miller Center Report* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 23–24. The mechanics of Kennedy’s taping system is discussed on the Web site of the University of Virginia’s Miller Center for Public Affairs, Presidential Recordings Program, at address www.whitehousetapes.org/pages/tapes_jfk.asp; and in William Doyle, *Inside the Oval Office: The White House Tapes from FDR to Clinton*, 102–4. The accuracy of published transcripts of the tapes is a matter of dispute among historians; see the Appendix on Sources for references to the literature. (U)

The portrayal of McCone in the movie *Thirteen Days* is overdrawn and at times inaccurate, although the actor playing him (Peter White) bears a strong physical resemblance and conveys the DCI’s decisive personality. McCone is depicted as a major figure throughout and an assertive advocate of massive airstrikes; he was neither. The movie shows him informing the president at the peak of the crisis that the Agency believed a hardline coup had ousted Khrushchev (no such analysis was made) and that the Soviets had deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba (the US government knew that FROG [free rocket over ground] missiles were on the island, but did not know whether they had been armed with nuclear warheads). Also contrary to the screenplay, McCone did not attend the secret meeting at which the president and a few selected ExComm members decided to trade the nuclear-tipped Jupiter missiles in Turkey for a withdrawal of Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba (discussed below). (U)

²⁹ Bundy, 420. (U)

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McCone anticipated that Khrushchev, living under fear of American nuclear weapons, would try to redress the Soviets' *strategic* disadvantage through a daring *tactical* stroke by forcing the United States to accept a forward offensive deployment, completed in secret, as an accomplished fact. Unlike McNamara, McCone certainly did not think "a missile is a missile." Once the missiles were in place, however, the United States still held the advantage. McCone and like-minded "hawks" on the ExComm judged that the Soviets' strategic inferiority (17 to 1 in deliverable warheads and bombs, 4 to 1 in ICBMs) would have precluded them from doing anything drastic if the United States attacked the sites or invaded the island. In their years in the national security establishment, McCone and like-minded supporters C. Douglas Dillon, Paul Nitze, and Dean Acheson, among others who were not averse to using military force against the Soviets in Cuba, had employed nuclear diplomacy, explicitly or implicitly, to achieve foreign policy objectives in both long-term and crisis situations. They saw the Cuban missile crisis as another in a protracted series of conflicts they had resolved satisfactorily because of US nuclear superiority. As historians James Blight and David Welch have observed, these leaders

had developed a powerful faith in nuclear coercion during the forties and fifties, the era of American dominance in nuclear weapons. This experience seems to have taught them two lessons: that nuclear superiority and inferiority ought to be judged in the same relative terms as those for non-nuclear weapons; and that the Soviets, vastly behind in deliverable nuclear weapons, could and should have been coerced into behaving themselves. To Dillon and Nitze [and, it could be added, McCone], it was absolutely, inarguably obvious that the nuclear superiority of the United States rendered the Soviets as helpless in the Cuban missile crisis as they were in Berlin—even more so, perhaps, because the United States also enjoyed conventional superiority in the Caribbean. In their view, the United States could and should have moved with impunity.³⁰ (U)

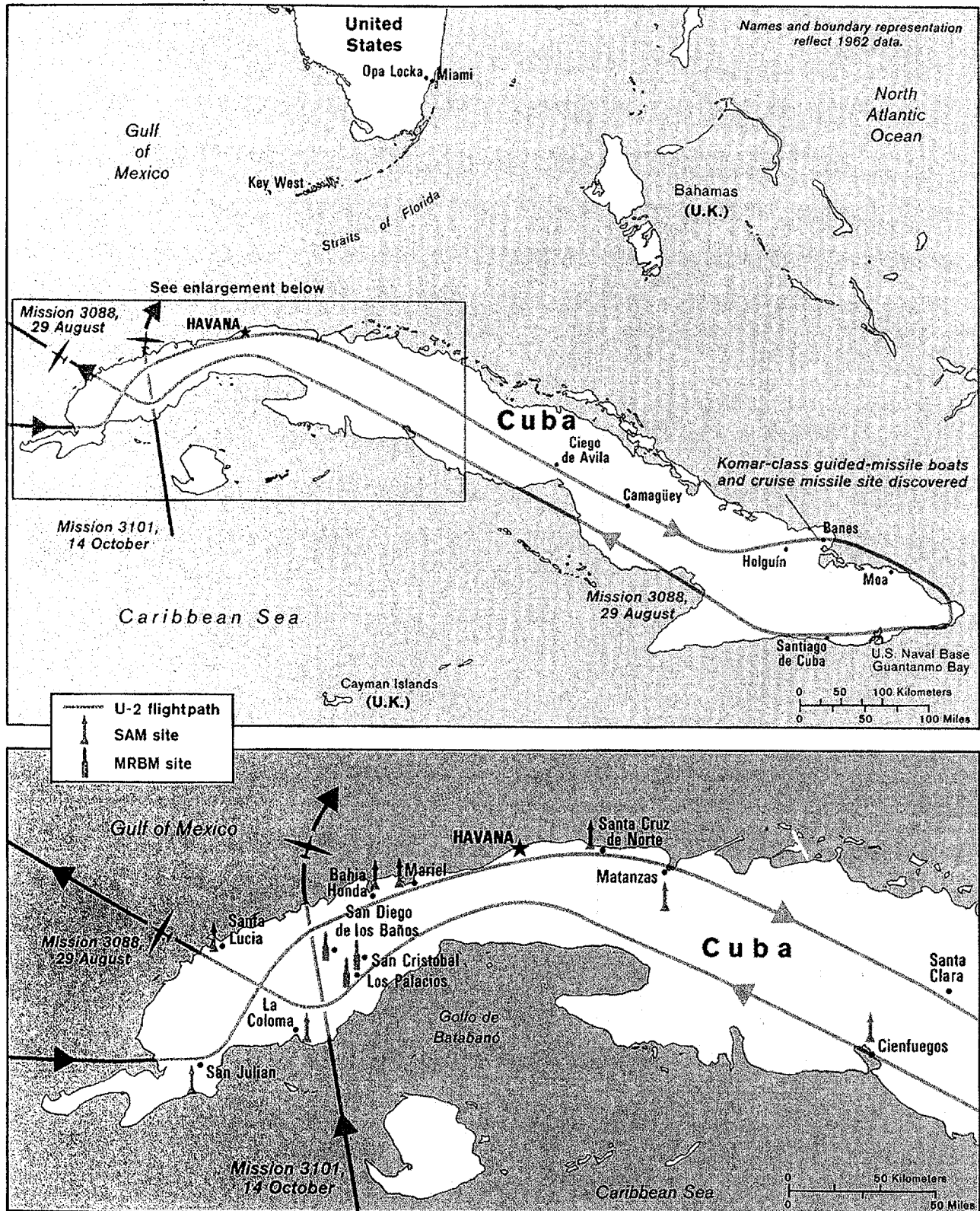
McCone's interpretation of the Soviet Union's action was baldly nationalistic. He construed the deployment of offensive missiles as a direct challenge to the national security of the United States. He believed that unless the Kennedy administration forced Khrushchev to back down, American influence and prestige abroad would decline—especially because US lack of resolution at the Bay of Pigs and inaction after the Berlin Wall went up had led the Soviet leader to think he could get away with such a gambit. Though McCone was one of the few ExComm members who knew all the United States was doing to remove Castro from power, he never suggested that Moscow or Havana might be justified in fearing a US invasion of Cuba. Neither then nor later did he ever indicate that he thought the Kennedys' obsession with Castro or their sometimes truculent posture toward Khrushchev might have helped provoke the crisis. (U)

The DCI's views corresponded with those of what several historians have designated as "traditionalists"—administration defenders such as Theodore Sorensen and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who believe President Kennedy had to force the Soviet Union to withdraw the missiles to defend the balance of power, preserve NATO, and stand up to Khrushchev's personal affront—as opposed to the interpretations of "revisionists"—mostly academics, independent scholars, and journalists who contend that the president needlessly risked nuclear war so the Republicans could not portray him as "soft" on the communists, and consequently missed opportunities for reaching an early détente with Moscow.³¹ Rather, McCone would have agreed with Sorensen's later description of the immediacy of the threat Khrushchev's move posed: "Soviet long-range missiles in Cuba represented a sudden, immediate and more dangerous and secretive change in the balance of power, in clear contradiction of all US commitments and Soviet pledges. It was a move which required a response from the United States, not for reasons of prestige or image but for reasons of national security in the broadest sense." McCone differed with some ExComm members and White House advisers on what tactics the administration should use, but his strategic perspective was "traditionalist." (U)

³⁰ Idem, "Kennedy and the Nuclear Question," in Kenneth W. Thompson, ed., *Portrait of American Presidents, Volume IV*, 210; Blight and Welch, 219 (see also the interviews with Dillon and McNamara on 169–70 and 196–97, respectively). The formative experience of the "hawks" during the early Cold War is detailed in Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin*. (U)

³¹ Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis*, 35; SNIE 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," 19 September 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, X, Cuba 1961–1962*, 1071 ("the main purpose of the present military buildup in Cuba is to strengthen the Communist regime there against what the Cubans and Soviets conceive to be a danger that the US may attempt by one means or another to overthrow it"); Thomas G. Paterson, "Commentary: The Defense-of-Cuba Theme and the Missile Crisis," *DH* 14, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 249–56; Richard Ned Lebow, "Domestic Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis: The Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations Reevaluated," *DH* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 471–92; Theodore C. Sorensen, *The Kennedy Legacy*, 187; Paterson and Brophy, 102. (U)

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U-2 missions over Cuba, 29 August and 14 October 1962 (U)

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While McCone certainly was cognizant of the domestic political implications of the crisis, at no time did he interpret it primarily in that context, nor at any point did he advise the president to act in a way principally calculated to benefit the Democratic Party in mid-term elections. He did not, for example, invoke the prospect of electoral defeat to move the president and the ExComm toward a more belligerent course. Nor did McCone, a present-minded empiricist, invoke lessons from history, such as Munich or Korea, as others did to justify a firm approach. The potential political fall-out certainly was on his mind, especially when he dealt with the provocative Sen. Keating or when briefing congressional leaders, but in the ExComm, he concentrated on intelligence and national security matters. He most likely would have agreed with Dillon's later assessment: "I don't accept the premise that we were swayed by the question of public opinion or how our choices would fly politically or anything else like that. Obviously, every president has to consider that sort of thing, but that wasn't *our* job."³² (U)

McCone's attitudes and emotions during these days on the brink were also affected by his encounters with the harried atmosphere and on-the-fly management style of the White House. It was hard for an organized and meticulous executive like McCone to find that the New Frontiersmen had not thought out the implications of their demands on the Soviet Union—that the president was forcing Khrushchev's hand but had little control over the outcome. "No one, as far as I can remember," Bundy later wrote, "thought it necessary in September to consider what we would do if

our warnings were disregarded.... President Kennedy...had to begin on the sixteenth [of October] almost from a standing start."³³ This instinctive, reactive approach to a policy matter of such grave import did not endear a hands-on planner like McCone to the Kennedy White House—least of all when the Intelligence Community was under unprecedented and incessant pressure to produce more information than ever before, faster than it ever had, in the rapidly unfolding scenario the DCI had predicted weeks earlier. (U)

While most of the ExComm members shifted positions on specific issues at one time or another, they soon aligned themselves into three groups, depending on their calculation of the risk of nuclear war and the course of action they advocated to end the crisis. "Hawks" favored early and strong use of military force, beginning with airstrikes against the missile sites and moving toward an invasion. "Doves" wanted to avoid any use of force and reach a diplomatic settlement that might even include the dismantling of US nuclear missiles in Turkey. "Owls" sought to maneuver between the hawk and dove positions by mixing mild military force with negotiation. In one scholar's characterization, "hawks were invaders...doves were traders...[and] owls were persuaders."³⁴ (U)

McCone, Acheson, Dillon, Nitze, and Maxwell Taylor strongly favored an airstrike/invasion/occupation course at first. The hawks' most compelling argument was that if military action were to be carried out, it had to be done quickly, before the missiles became operational. Otherwise, some

³² Lebow, "Domestic Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 477 n. 31. (U)

³³ Bundy, 413–14. (U)

³⁴ James G. Blight, Joseph S. Nye Jr., and David A. Welch, "The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited," *Foreign Affairs* 66, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 173; Allison, 204. The ExComm's hawks have been mentioned; Stevenson was the principal dove; and Bundy, McNamara, and Ball would be its most influential owls. Maxwell Taylor later termed the ExComm's three options toward the Soviet missiles as "talk them out, squeeze them out, or shoot them out." Thomas G. Paterson, "When Fear Ruled: Rethinking the Cuban Missile Crisis," *New England Journal of History* 52, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 15–16. The group dynamics of the ExComm have been extensively studied from a variety of perspectives. Perhaps the best known is the model of bureaucratic bargaining by rational actors, set forth by Graham Allison in *Essence of Decision*. The basic argument is repeated in the second edition of the book, co-authored by Philip Zelikow, which includes new historical material as well as discourses on epistemology and analytical methodology that are often opaque and irrelevant; see the reviews by Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding Decisionmaking, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 134–64; and Bruce Kuklick, "Reconsidering the Missile Crisis and Its Interpretation," in *DH* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 517–23. A nearly impenetrable attempt at political science modeling of the ExComm is Mark L. Haas, "Prospect Theory and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (June 2001): 241–70. (U)

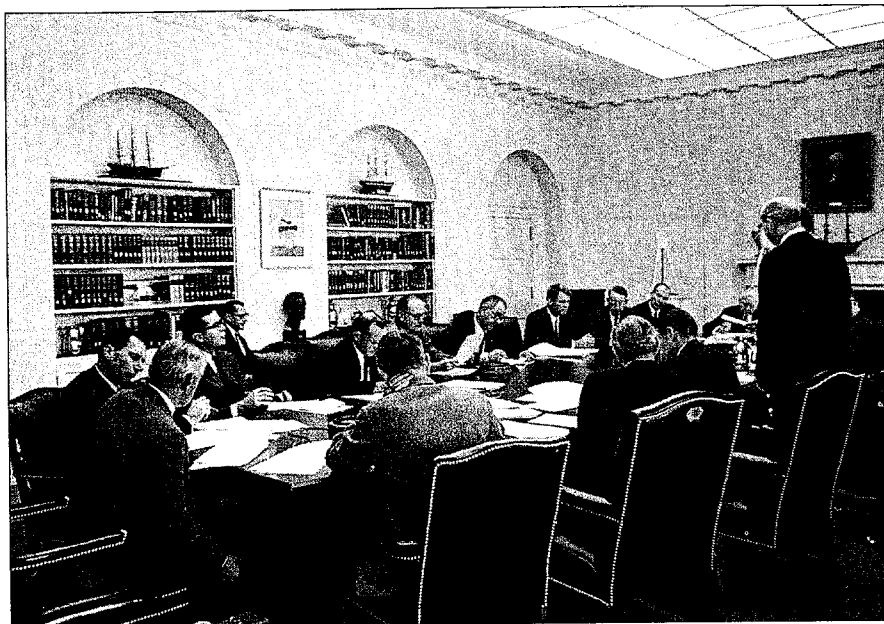
An interpretive concept used in analyzing the missile crisis that entered the common parlance was "groupthink"—the tendency of a cohesive body of decisionmakers to seek consensus because of social pressures to conform to group norms. See Irving L. Janus, *Victims of Groupthink*, chap. 6. Janus concluded that the ExComm "avoided succumbing to groupthink" because its members "never attained that complacent sense of security that so often emerges when a groupthink-dominated group arrives at a consensus"; because they did not "stereotype" the enemy; and because new developments continually forced them to reconsider their views and, in some cases, reverse their judgments more than once (149, 155, 158–60, 165). A slightly different take on the ExComm's consensus-building derives from Kenneth O'Donnell's recollection that Kennedy already had opted for the quarantine by 19 October—raising the possibility that the president used the ExComm mainly as a vehicle for getting his senior deputies to ratify his prior decision rather than to weigh alternatives. See Michael P. Riccards, "The Dangerous Legacy: John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis," in Paul Harper and Joann P. Krieg, eds., *John F. Kennedy: The Promise Revisited*, 92–95. (U)

Another angle on the ExComm, "crisis-induced stress on decisionmaking," was developed by political scientist Alexander L. George in his contribution to Fredric Solomon and Robert Q. Marston, eds., *The Medical Implications of Nuclear War*, 529–52. According to George, a senior Kennedy administration official told him that two important members of the ExComm (their names were not revealed) "had been unable to cope with the stress, becoming quite passive and unable to fulfill their responsibilities. Their condition was very noticeable, however; others took over their duties..." (541). A review of McCone's participation on the ExComm clearly indicates that he neither was pressured, nor pressured others, toward "groupthink" and that he did not become dysfunctional under the strain. (U)

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might survive the airstrikes and be launched against US cities. Moreover, the current deployment was but the entering wedge for a more massive and threatening buildup in Cuba and had to be dealt with rapidly and decisively. The DCI moderated his view during the first few days. Of the four approaches that emerged from the ExComm discussions by 20 October—airstrikes, a blockade cast as an ultimatum to be followed by air attacks, a blockade as a delaying tactic to gauge Soviet intentions, and a blockade as an opening to negotiations—McCone supported the second alternative. Although he came to oppose an airstrike as a first step, he did not believe a blockade alone was enough. He doubted Khrushchev would recognize it; “[w]ith his prestige at stake...he would go right through.” Accordingly, McCone argued for a quarantine with the proviso that if the Soviets did not dismantle the offensive missiles within 72 hours, US aircraft would destroy them.³⁵ (U)

Details of the ExComm meetings McCone attended chronicle the evolution of his thinking. He first attended a crisis meeting on the morning of 17 October at the Department of State. The previous day, the ExComm had set the outlines for the early discussions he participated in by raising four possible courses of action: selective airstrikes against the missile sites; broader airstrikes that also hit airfields, aircraft, and potential nuclear storage sites; a blockade; and a large-scale amphibious invasion. The informal conference on the 17th, scheduled to precede a meeting with the president at the White House an hour later, included several



The NSC ExComm shown meeting in the Cabinet Room at the White House. McCone is at center-right near the fireplace. (U)

Photo: JFK Library

national security advisers, among them Bundy, Taylor, Ball, and Llewellyn Thompson, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union. The DCI agreed with Thompson that Khrushchev had deployed the missiles in Cuba as a prelude to confrontation over Berlin, and added that the Soviets also wanted to “satisfy their ambitions in Latin America by this show of determination and courage against the American Imperialist” and “establish a ‘hallmark’ of accomplishment by other Latin American countries...within strike range of the United States.” When McNamara raised the subject of Soviet nuclear warheads, McCone noted that recent debriefings of GRU agent Oleg Penkovskiy indicated that Soviet field commanders had much more autonomy than their US counterparts—suggesting they might fire the missiles without Khrushchev’s explicit order.³⁶ (U)

³⁵ “Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council,” 20 October 1962, and “Minutes of the 506th Meeting of the National Security Council,” 21 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 132, 143; McCone, “Memorandum for the Files,” 20 October 1962, *ibid.*, 137; Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 107. See also McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting with the President, Attorney General, Secretary McNamara, General Taylor, and Mr. McCone,” 21 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 241; and McNamara, “Notes on October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President,” *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, 144–45, wherein McCone said the United States should start with a blockade—a surprise airstrike would be seen as a Pearl Harbor-type of attack—but “should be prepared for an air strike and thereafter an invasion.” McCone moved to the “blockade plus” option on the 18th or 19th; Robert Kennedy’s notes of an ExComm meeting on one of those days listed McCone’s name under the heading “strike” with a question mark and the notation “switched” next to it. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 217. By the 20th, the ExComm divided as follows: Taylor and Bundy wanted to start with airstrikes; McCone, Robert Kennedy, Thompson, and Dillon supported the blockade-then-airstrikes approach; Rusk wanted to use the blockade to buy time; and McNamara, Stevenson, and Sorensen wanted to use it as an opening to negotiations. NSC meeting on 20 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 601–2, 614; “Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council,” 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 126–36. (U)

³⁶ McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting...in Secretary Ball’s Conference Room...at 0830, 17 October [1962,]” and “Memorandum for Discussion Today, October 17, 1962...The Cuban Situation,” *CMC Documents*, 160–62. (U)

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McCone then attended the full ExComm meeting at the White House. He presented the latest intelligence—IRBM launch sites had been sighted and IL-28 bombers able to deliver nuclear payloads had been detected—participated in the ensuing discussion, and then, as the White House's informal liaison to the Republican Party, was dispatched to Gettysburg to describe the situation to Dwight Eisenhower. He reported that the former president regarded the situation as "intolerable," would support any decisive military move the administration took, and preferred a "concentrated attack on Havana first." McCone's briefings contributed to Eisenhower's decision to declare publicly on 23 October that "the president's immediate handling of foreign affairs was not a legitimate topic" for debate—a declaration that helped undercut GOP accusations that the administration was playing politics with Cuba on the eve of congressional elections.³⁷ (U)

From Gettysburg, McCone returned to a late-night ExComm meeting at the Department of State, where he endorsed Taylor's proposal for an airstrike, without prior negotiation, against the missile sites and bombers. (Community analysts now judged that the MRBMs could be ready to launch in as little as 18 hours.) The DCI questioned the value of parleying with Khrushchev at this stage, anticipating that the Soviet leader would stall to delay the US government's response. "[I]t would be somewhat like the Geneva test suspension business. We got into it and we couldn't get out of it!"³⁸ (U)

While giving the president and the ExComm intelligence updates and joining them in discussions of policy options during the next few days, McCone also oversaw the community's collection and analysis efforts. Every morning, before he went to the White House, he received briefings on the missile sites from NPIC and USIB's Guided Missiles and Astronautics Intelligence Committee (chaired by the head of

CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence, Albert Wheelon). McCone relayed the assessments to the ExComm and received tasking from its members. He then met with USIB to assign requirements for gathering intelligence and assessing its significance. (Because he was so closely involved in policy matters, he temporarily turned over formal chairmanship of the board to DDCI Carter.) USIB reviewed all intelligence on Cuba, approved estimates prepared by BNE and special papers written in response to ExComm or presidential taskings, and reviewed and endorsed recommendations for aerial reconnaissance.³⁹ ~~XX~~

McCone and the other crisis managers were leaning toward a blockade when CIA's senior analysts issued special estimates on 19 and 20 October that inferentially questioned whether that option would work. The Soviets had put the missiles into Cuba, according to the estimates, "to demonstrate that the world balance of forces has shifted so far in their favor that the US can no longer prevent the advance of Soviet offensive power even into its own hemisphere." Consequently, Soviet leaders had too much at stake to back down in the face of a blockade. Moreover, contrary to the judgment of most ExComm members, a blockade would not reduce the likelihood of war. Instead, "the Soviets would be somewhat less likely to retaliate with military force in areas outside Cuba in response to speedy, effective invasion than in response to more limited forms of military action against Cuba." A forceful US response "would be more likely to make the Soviets pause in opening new theaters of conflict than limited action or action which drags out"—such as a blockade.⁴⁰ (U)

The estimates notwithstanding, President Kennedy had decided by the 19th to impose a "quarantine" and announce it in a televised speech two days later. McCone commented on the draft text and engaged in other matters related to the address. He cautioned the White House that, in its preoccu-

³⁷ ExComm meeting on 18 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 535–36; McCone memorandum, "Brief Discussion with the President...17 October 1962," "Memorandum for the File...Conversation with General Eisenhower...", 17 October 1962, and "Memorandum of Discussion with the President Alone, October 21, 1962," *CMC Documents*, 165–68, 243–44. McCone briefed Eisenhower once more during the height of the crisis and twice during November. One of the briefings took place at McCone's Washington residence and was recorded, presumably for use at the White House. At the president's request, McCone also briefed Vice President Johnson privately. McCone calendars, entries for 17 October–30 November 1962; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the President Alone, October 21, 1962," and "Memorandum for the File...Meeting with the Vice President on 21 October 1962," *CMC Documents*, 243–45; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 325–26. The Soviets never delivered IRBMs to Cuba. Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, 276. (U)

³⁸ McCone memorandum summarizing meetings on 17 October 1962, dated 19 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 172; ExComm meeting on 18 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, II*, 537. (U)

³⁹ Carter-Knoche OH, 17; Lay, vol. 3, 419–46; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 282–84. ~~XX~~

⁴⁰ SNIE 11-18-62, "Soviet Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," 19 October 1962, and SNIE 11-19-62, "Major Consequences of Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," 20 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 197–202, 211–20. The latter SNIE concluded that 16 MRBM launchers were operational, and that the missiles could be fired within eight hours of a decision to launch them. Also on the 20th, a nuclear warhead bunker was identified at one of the missile sites for the first time. US intelligence never confirmed during the crisis that nuclear warheads were in Cuba, but the ExComm assumed—correctly, as it turned out—that they were. (U)

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pation with Soviet missiles, it should not overlook its original *bête noire* in the Caribbean—Fidel Castro. “We must not lose sight of the very important objectives of removing the Castro Communist government from Cuba and establishing a climate which would permit the Cuban people to establish a government of their own choice.” (Soon after, the attorney general told McCone that he had discussed these concerns with the president, and that the DCI need not worry about them further.) McCone also warned President Kennedy to anticipate criticism that the administration had given too little credence to early HUMINT reports about the missiles and so failed to detect them until the 14 October U-2 mission. Lastly, McCone had a prominent part in the decision to seek support from the governments of the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Canada by showing their leaders copies of the aerial photographs before the president’s speech.⁴¹ ~~(S)~~

After delivering the quarantine speech on the evening of the 22nd, the president employed McCone’s political skills and connections to explain the decision to congressional leaders and prominent journalists. The DCI knew it would be a tough assignment, given the saber rattling of several prominent legislators he had briefed just before the address. “I have been forced to defend the executive branch of the government and CIA against the questions (1) why did we not know about this sooner and (2) [why] did we not estimate or forecast this eventuality.” The lawmakers—members of the CIA oversight committees—thought President Kennedy’s speech had been effective but still wanted the administration to take stronger military action. McCone, alluding to the White House’s tactic of retaining the initiative in the crisis, replied that the United States had put the

Soviet Union on notice and could now take military action “at a time of our own choosing and by means of our own determination.” The journalists—columnists Arthur Krock and David Lawrence, and investigative reporter Paul Scott—were skeptical of the administration’s justification and wondered why official statements as recently as 18 October had indicated that the Soviet buildup was defensive. These exchanges gave McCone a preview of the criticism CIA and the administration would have to weather in the coming months of postmortems about “intelligence failure.”⁴² (U)

For the next few days, the DCI and the ExComm monitored the Soviet reaction to the blockade—especially the courses of Soviet ships sailing toward the quarantine line, but also Warsaw Pact military activities—and braced themselves for hostilities. To help UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson make a compelling case before the Security Council, McCone authorized the release of some of the better U-2 and low-level reconnaissance photographs, and sent Cline and Lundahl to New York to brief the ambassador.⁴³ The weary ExComm members were whipsawed between good news—the OAS unanimously approved the blockade—and bad news: ~~(S)~~ Soviet submarines moving into the Caribbean. McCone also reported worrisome military developments behind the Iron Curtain: ~~(S)~~

~~(S)~~ The DCI lightened the somber tone on the 23rd with an ironic quip. While waiting for many minutes to be connected to Stevenson in New York, the DCI asked Ball, “George, if it’s this

⁴¹ McCone untitled memorandum, 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 137–38; NSC meeting on 22 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 45; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 319–21, 328–34. Senior US government emissaries and CIA officers briefed Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of the United Kingdom, President Charles de Gaulle of France, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of West Germany, and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker of Canada in their respective capitals at various times on 22 October. Sherman Kent, “The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962: Presenting the Photographic Evidence Abroad,” in Donald P. Steury, ed., *Sherman Kent and the Board of National Estimates*, 189–209. Several days later, McCone repeated his admonition about not losing sight of Castro. He opposed any agreement that would “insulate” Cuba from further actions; getting rid of the missiles would not get rid of Castro. ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 308. Thinking like the maritime magnate he was in private life, McCone had an exchange with McNamara about how requisitioning merchant vessels for an invasion of Cuba would harm the American shipping industry and sectors of the economy that depended on ocean transport. ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, *ibid.*, 117–19. ~~(S)~~

⁴² ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 105–7; meeting with congressional leadership, 22 October 1962, *ibid.*, 60–99; Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 159–62; McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC...,” “Meetings with Senator Russell, Senator Hickel, and Chairman Vinson,” and “Meetings with Mr. Krock, Mr. David Lawrence, and Mr. Scott,” all dated 23 October 1962, *CMC Documents*, 283–90; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 356–62. Arthur Lundahl had an equally important role in the congressional briefing. In keeping with his policy of encouraging congressional oversight, McCone during the crisis appeared twice before joint meetings of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees and once before a joint session of the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees. In addition, CIA officers gave 15 personal briefings to legislators during the peak of the crisis. Haines and ~~(S)~~ 101. ~~(S)~~

⁴³ Stevenson—humiliated when he was caught using deceptive photographs provided by CIA during the Bay of Pigs debate at the UN—required assurances that the present pictures were as persuasive as claimed. He told the Agency officers, “I hope you are in a position to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the missiles exist in Cuba.” Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 395. (U)

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CHAPTER 5

hard to start a blockade around Cuba, how the hell did we ever start World War II? [Laughter.]”⁴⁴ ~~✗~~

At the ExComm meeting on the morning of the 24th, McCone interrupted the discussion to report information from the Office of Naval Intelligence that Soviet ships carrying missiles to Cuba had stopped or turned back. “[T]he other fellow just blinked,” said Dean Rusk famously, but the danger of war remained high. The Soviets were still hurrying to make their offensive missiles operational, and a naval confrontation at the quarantine line was still possible even though most of the Soviet ships headed toward Cuba had reversed course by the 25th. As Rusk told reporters, “the key issue is the presence of these weapons in Cuba. The object is to get them out of there, without war, if possible.” The ExComm agreed that any acceptable resolution to the crisis must include withdrawal of the missiles and an immediate end to construction on the launch sites. In addition, UN inspectors must be permitted into Cuba at once. Two Soviet approaches on the 26th, a back-channel message to an ABC newsman and a discursive but essentially conciliatory personal letter from Khrushchev to the president, suggested the outlines of an agreement: the Soviets would dismantle and remove the offensive missiles in return for a US pledge not to invade Cuba.⁴⁵ (U)

That was as far as the ExComm was willing to go just then. McCone and several other members bluntly rejected Stevenson’s suggestion, first made on the 20th and reiterated six days later, that the administration propose withdrawing from Guantánamo Naval Base as part of a plan to demilitarize Cuba and removing Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for Soviet withdrawal of their missiles from the island. Stevenson further proposed a “standstill” that included suspending construction on the missile sites, halting ship traffic to Cuba, and lifting the quarantine. His ideas evoked a heated reaction from McCone. Until then,

the DCI had restricted himself mostly to dry recitations of the latest intelligence and exchanges about technical operations (such as the use of neutron detectors to determine if ships were carrying nuclear warheads). Except in a few brief, private meetings and telephone calls, he had refrained from entering into policy discussions in detail. Now, however, he thought the administration might be compromising too much. He denied that obsolete Jupiter missiles in Turkey pointed at the Soviet Union were analogous to newer Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles soon to be aimed at the United States. Believing the administration had the upper hand, the DCI snapped back:

I don’t believe, I don’t agree with that [Stevenson’s proposal], Mr. President. I feel very strongly about it.... [T]he real crux of this matter is the fact that he’s got these [missiles] pointed, for all you know, right now at our hearts. And this is going to produce...a situation when we get to Berlin after the elections, which changes the entire balance of world power. It puts us under a very great handicap in carrying out our obligations, not only to our Western European allies, but to the hemisphere. And I think that we’ve got the momentum now... *That threat must be removed before we can drop the quarantine.* If we drop that quarantine once, we’re never going to be able to put it in effect again. And I feel that we *must* say that the quarantine goes on until we are satisfied that these are inoperable. [Italics indicate vocal emphasis. McCone hit the table when he said “inoperable.”]

The DCI further insisted that American or Western technicians, not UN officials, inspect the missile sites. “[W]e ought to have sophisticated people on this mission.... We ought to be able to nominate the people that go...British, French... Swedes or Austrians. I want somebody that knows something about this business.”⁴⁶ (U)

⁴⁴ [redacted] 391–93; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 112; McCone, “Memorandum for the File...Executive Committee Meeting on 23 October 1962...,” McCone papers, box 6, folder 2; ExComm meeting on 23 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 133–36; Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 189; McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC, 10:00 a.m., October 23, 1962,” *CMC Documents*, 285. ~~✗~~

⁴⁵ ExComm meeting on 24 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 191–92, 196; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 391–92; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 115–16; Abel, 143; McCone, “Memorandum for the File...Executive Committee Meeting 10/25/62—10:00 a.m.,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 201. Robert Kennedy later described Khrushchev’s letter—transmitted as a cable to the Department of State from the US embassy in Moscow—as “very long and emotional.” Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 86; *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 235–41. (U)

⁴⁶ Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 190; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 310, 312, 317. McCone first conveyed his objections to Stevenson’s idea about Guantánamo when the ambassador raised it on the 20th. The DCI called Robert Kennedy, who confirmed with the president that there was no plan to relinquish the installation. McCone thought doing so would “place a crown of jewels on the head of Castro.” “Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council,” and McCone untitled memorandum, both dated 20 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 136–37. Sheldon Stern, formerly the historian at the JFK Library, has identified the speaker of the words quoted in the text above as banker-diplomat John McCloy, a latecomer to the ExComm, who would soon lead the US team that negotiated the details of the missile withdrawal. *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 273 and n. 241. However, as indicated below, George Ball—who was present at this meeting—identified McCone as the speaker. (U)

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By this time in the crisis, McCone's willingness to trade the missiles in Cuba for those in Turkey had evaporated, falling victim to the reality of Soviet *offensive* missiles, not just SAMs, in Cuba and the conclusion reached in the White House that Khrushchev must be forced to stand down. "I believe the strategic situation has greatly changed with the presence of these weapons in Cuba," he told the ExComm on 26 October. He believed the Soviet escalation had made such a deal neither feasible nor appropriate. Moscow had challenged Washington in its own backyard; no compromise could be made under that kind of duress.⁴⁷ ~~XX~~

In his memoir, George Ball described the reaction of McCone, Dillon, and other hardliners to Stevenson's proposal as "outraged and shrill." The DCI and the other ExComm members, Ball wrote, "violated the calm and objectivity we had tried to maintain...when they intemperately upbraided Stevenson...indicating more the state of anxiety and emotional exhaustion pervading the discussion than any reasoned reaction." Recordings of the ExComm's deliberations indicate, however, that while McCone spoke more rapidly and with more feeling than usual, he did not raise his voice, address Stevenson disrespectfully, or join others in berating the ambassador. Ball's sympathy with Stevenson's proposal may have caused him to exaggerate the tone and tenor of McCone's remarks. By the time of this meeting, the blockade option had been chosen, and McCone believed that Stevenson's idea moved the discussion backward and introduced an extra, unneeded concession (Guantánamo). Contributing to the DCI's uncompromising attitude was his awareness that airstrikes stood a better chance than before of immobilizing most of



McCone leaves the White House after an ExComm meeting. (U)

Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

the missiles because more was known about the sites' locations and defenses. The United States held the advantage strategically and tactically and, by his way of thinking, need not make concessions.⁴⁸ (U)

Right after the exchange with Stevenson on the 26th, McCone sought and received a private audience with the president (his only one during the crisis). With Lundahl, he showed the president new, low-level photographs of the MRBM sites. He said he was "growing increasingly concerned about following a political route...unless the initial and immediate step is to ensure that these missile are immobilized." When the president responded that the only other ways to accomplish that besides diplomacy were sabotage, an airstrike, or an invasion, the DCI discounted the prospects for commando raids and cautioned that "[i]nvasion is going to be a much more serious undertaking than most people realize" because the "very lethal stuff" the Soviets had deployed to Cuba would "give an invading force a pretty bad time." "[I]f we invade, by the time we get to these sites after a very bloody fight...they'll [still] be pointing [the missiles] at us." When the president asked what he would advise doing, McCone replied, "This would lead me to moving quickly on an airstrike" if negotiations failed. "[W]e feel there's a higher probability of immobilizing these missiles—all of them—with a strike than...our thinking has tended in the last few days." Later in the day, the White House issued a public statement that "the development of ballistic missile sites in Cuba continues at a rapid pace...there is no evidence to date...that there is any intention to dismantle or discontinue work on these missile sites."⁴⁹ (U)

⁴⁷ McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President," 23 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; ExComm Meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 312. ~~XX~~

⁴⁸ George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs*, 295; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 312. The definitive treatment of the Jupiters' relationship to the Cuban missile crisis is Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, chaps. 5 and 6. Also on the 26th, McCone told the ExComm that Soviet FROG missiles had been detected in Cuba after a reconnaissance flight the day before. Knowledge of their destructiveness moved US policymakers more toward the airstrike option. ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 327; Mark Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," and James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, "Kramer vs. Kramer: Or, How Can You Have Revisionism in the Absence of Orthodoxy," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 3 (Fall 1993): 40–50. (U)

⁴⁹ McCone meeting with President Kennedy on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 323–29; Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 281–84; Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1962, 437–38. (U)

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CHAPTER 5

MONGOOSE Bites Back (U)

As the crisis deepened, problems with Operation MONGOOSE caused a furious row among the project's overstressed, overtired principals. The causes were disagreements over bureaucratic authority and operational priorities and confusion over the scheduling of clandestine missions. Personal differences made already brittle tempers snap. At meetings on the 26th, the animosity between Robert Kennedy, Task Force W chief William Harvey, MONGOOSE director Edward Lansdale, and McCone was laid bare. MONGOOSE project officers suffered the most in the end. (U)

Lansdale resisted CIA's plan to divert resources from MONGOOSE to collect intelligence on the Soviet missile sites and assist a possible military invasion—specifically, the infiltration of 10 five-man “pathfinder” teams into Cuba via submarine. Lansdale complained that the Agency was not supporting MONGOOSE sufficiently and that the JCS and the secretary of defense had not kept him informed of preinvasion planning. McCone—noting that “there was considerable criticism by innuendo of the CIA/Lansdale relationship”—termed Lansdale's general complaint about CIA's lack of assistance to MONGOOSE “completely erroneous” and defended the pathfinder operation as a crisis collection activity fully within the Agency's area of responsibility. He allowed that Lansdale may have “misunderstood” some Agency actions taken according to “long-standing arrangements” to support military activities. For McCone, the question was whether espionage and invasion-related missions should be undertaken in MONGOOSE channels, which he regarded as too cumbersome to be timely in a crisis, or as joint CIA-Pentagon activities. Pend-

ing a decision by “Higher Authority” about how the operations should be managed, he decided to halt the 50-man infiltration. He did not want CIA pressured into launching the operation at that politically precarious time. If there was a military requirement for the mission, then the White House and the Pentagon would have to take clear responsibility for ordering it.⁵⁰ ~~XX~~

Sabotage and harassment missions at this phase of the crisis presented a problem of a different kind and degree, however, and Harvey got into deep trouble with McCone and Kennedy—even though he thought he was carrying out their wishes. Just after the presence of the Soviet missiles was confirmed and Robert Kennedy had criticized MONGOOSE managers for not accomplishing much, the SGA authorized stepped-up sabotage operations on the island. Even though the White House did not want any operational “flaps” that would give the Kremlin a justification for having or keeping missiles in Cuba, it told MONGOOSE officers to proceed with their missions. At no time during the missile crisis did the White House order project managers to curtail or suspend operations; they were only told to be especially careful that none caused problems. Following up on the SGA's instructions, Harvey and Task Force W decided to again mount an attack on the Matahambre copper mine and so informed the attorney general and Lansdale. A six-man team landed on the night of 19 October. Four operatives responsible for caching weapons were recovered two days later, but the two who were to conduct the sabotage were not.⁵¹ ~~XX~~

When the collection and sabotage missions were discussed at an SGA meeting on the 26th, several members sensed a disaster in the making.⁵² Lansdale disavowed any knowledge

⁵⁰ Carter memorandum to McCone, “...MONGOOSE Operations and General Lansdale's Problems,” 25 October 1962, and McCone memorandum, “...Meeting of the NSC Executive Committee, 26 October 1962...” *CMC Documents*, 311–12, 317–18; [Lansdale,] “Operation MONGOOSE: Main Points to Consider[.]” 26 October 1962, McCone, “Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting...October 26, 1962...” and Harvey memorandum to McCone, “Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation,” 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Bromley Smith (NSC), “Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council,” and Thomas Parrott, “Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation Mongoose...,” both dated 26 October 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 221, 230; ExComm meeting on 26 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK*, III, 288–90; *Robert Kennedy in His Own Words*, 378; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 533; Samuel Halpern, “Revisiting the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter*, March 1994: 6–7; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 1–2; Corn, 93; D.J. Brennan memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), “Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba,” 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA file, doc. no. 62-80750-4026; Carter untitled memorandum, 30 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum to the attorney general et al., 30 October 1962, National Security Files, Cuba, Subjects: Intelligence Materials, 1 October–12 November 1962, JFK Library. ~~XX~~

⁵¹ Harvey memorandum to McCone, “Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation,” 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Halpern, 4–5; Branch and Crile, 62. ~~XX~~

⁵² Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: Seymour Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, 375, citing interview with Halpern; Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 144; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 148; [Lansdale,] “Operation MONGOOSE: Main Points to Consider[.]” 26 October 1962, McCone, “Memorandum of MONGOOSE Meeting...October 26, 1962...” and Harvey memorandum to McCone, “Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation,” 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Smith, “Summary Record of the Sixth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council,” and Parrott, “Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) on Operation Mongoose...,” both dated 26 October 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 221, 230; Brennan memorandum to Sullivan, “Central Intelligence Agency, Anti-Castro Activities, Internal Security—Cuba,” 30 October 1962, Harvey FBI FOIA file, doc. no. 62-80750-4026. ~~XX~~

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of or responsibility for the operations, and Maxwell Taylor said the JCS had not laid on any such requirements. Robert Kennedy recalled that he was "furious" because "nobody knew what they were doing," and that he had learned about the missions only because an exile contact had called him. He said he told Harvey, "You were dealing with people's lives...and then you're going to go off with a half-assed operation such as this." He also questioned the rationale for using valuable expatriate assets at a time when Cuban security was so tight and the chance of capture so high. ~~XX~~

At this point, McCone perceived the correlation of forces and made a bureaucratic calculation to side with the White House. "Mr. Harvey's defense of the [Matahambre] plan was not conclusive," he tersely recounted. "He could not demonstrate a need, he could give no direct answers as to either the casualties or the specific successes of the teams which have been infiltrated, and he could not explain why or when three teams were reported 'en route by small craft today,' when he...had been specifically ordered by DCI on 10/25 to withhold ten scheduled teams until after the meeting." To make matters worse, Harvey added that the teams could not be recalled because they could not be contacted. According to Harvey's deputy Samuel Halpern, at some point in the meeting—whether before, during, or after Kennedy harangued Harvey is unclear—the Task Force W chief said "in essence, 'We wouldn't be in such trouble now if you guys had had some balls in the Bay of Pigs.'" By some accounts, Kennedy then stormed out of the room. Once the atmosphere cooled a bit, the SGA decided to suspend all agent infiltrations of any kind for the time being. Lansdale, reaffirmed as overall coordinator of MONGOOSE-related activities, was directed to develop requirements from the Joint Chiefs and the Department of State for future operations, but the overall project was put in abeyance pending the outcome of negotiations between Washington and Moscow.⁵³ ~~XX~~

By the time McCone returned to Langley that evening, he had had enough of wrong-headed subordinates. He must have been especially riled that a celebrated CIA officer, rather than the Kennedys' protégé Lansdale, had blundered, thus reflecting badly on the Agency's competence and his own management ability. He told Ray Cline that "Harvey has destroyed himself today. His usefulness is ended." The



Sherman Kent (U)

DCI summoned Harvey for a dressing down, immediately after which he called in Sherman Kent, who had written the estimate that had failed to predict the Soviet missile deployment. "I've just been made a charter member of the bleeding asshole society," the salty tongued Kent recalled telling a colleague after the woodshed session with the DCI, "but Bill Harvey's the president." Harvey's fate was sealed when, just over two weeks after the president instructed Task Force W to suspend "all action, maritime, and black infiltration operations," Radio Havana announced on 13 November that Cuban security forces had "smashed" an attempt to sabotage the Matahambre mine and described two apprehended raiders as CIA agents. ~~XX~~

McCone had wanted to fire Harvey several times before—perhaps most so when Harvey dozed off during a meeting with him soon after he took over—but Richard Helms always dissuaded him. This time, McCone removed Harvey from Task Force W—"When you take a plant supervisor and make him president of the company, it doesn't always work out," the DCI reportedly said—and replaced him with Desmond FitzGerald, the suave chief of the DDP's Far East Division. Harvey spent the next several months at a desk in the basement of Headquarters, without an assignment while the Seventh Floor considered what to

⁵³ McCone and President Kennedy briefly discussed another kind of sabotage—having MONGOOSE operatives attack the missile sites—on the 26th. The president asked whether the sites were vulnerable from the ground. "Can one bullet do much to that [a missile]?" McCone responded, "Well, if a fella went across there with bullet punctures, it could. It invariably wreaks hell with it." The president replied, "Would it blow or is it just...?" Arthur Lundahl answered, "It would be fuming red nitric acid, sir," which, he claimed, would be very hard to contain. Stern, *Averting the "Final Failure"*, 283. No such attack on any site was authorized or conducted. (U)

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do with him. Helms—acting in McCone's absence— McCone disapproved but did not rescind the assignment. ~~✗~~

Climax (U)

The longest, and perhaps the most nerve-wracking, day of the crisis for McCone and his colleagues came on the 27th. Four days into the blockade, with all 24 MRBM launchers considered operational and construction on the IRBM sites proceeding rapidly, a series of wrenching events occurred to bring the United States and the Soviet Union closer to war than ever. For the first time, Cuban antiaircraft gunners fired on a low-level US reconnaissance mission, hitting one plane; Soviet MiGs scrambled to intercept a U-2 that had strayed into Soviet airspace near Alaska; an Air Force pilot was killed when his U-2 was shot down near a SAM site in eastern Cuba; and Radio Moscow broadcast a second, much less conciliatory, message from Khrushchev to Kennedy demanding that the United States remove its missiles from Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.⁵⁵ (U)

Told of the U-2 shootdown, McCone became almost livid. He urged "a more stark, *violent* protest" against this "new order of defiance of...public statements [Khrushchev] made.... If there's any continuation of this, we've got to take those SAM sites out of there." Several other ExComm members—among them McNamara, Taylor, and Dillon—agreed. After the discussion digressed into the effect trading the missiles in Turkey might have on NATO, McCone brought the members back to the attack on the U-2 and insisted that it be dealt with on its own.

I think that we ought to take this occasion to send directly to Khrushchev, by *fast wire*, the most *violent* protest, and demand that he...stop this business and stop it right away, or we're gonna take those SAM sites out *immediately*.... Tell him we're gonna conduct surveillance as announced by the President, and *one shot* and in we come.... I wouldn't try to negotiate a deal. I'd send him a *threatening* letter. I'd say: "You made public an offer; we'll accept that offer. But you shot down planes today before we even had a chance to send you a letter, despite the fact that *you* knew that we were sending *unarmed* planes on a publicly announced surveillance. Now, we're telling you, Mr. Khrushchev...that we are sending unarmed planes over Cuba. If one of them is shot up, we're going to take your installations out, and you can expect it. And therefore, you issue an order immediately."

When McNamara said the threat should be disassociated from the missiles in Turkey, McCone disagreed: "No, I wouldn't, because when the pressure lets up, you'll get another proposal. You'll have Berlin thrown in. That's the point I want to make, Bob. You'll get something else thrown in tomorrow. You'll get Berlin." Later in the meeting, the DCI put on the table a bluntly worded draft response demanding that the Soviets immediately stop work on the offensive missile bases while the two governments discussed Khrushchev's proposals. He was not inclined to give the Soviet leader a face-saving way out of the crisis. The letter that President Kennedy sent to Khrushchev later that evening—drafted at the same time elsewhere by Robert Kennedy and Ted Sorensen—left out the threat to attack SAM sites.⁵⁶ (U)

⁵⁴ Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 144–46; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Mine Sabotage Operation," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Havana Reports About the Arrest of Two CIA Agents," 14 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 137, 141; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 28. After the fact, Helms supported Harvey on sending the pathfinders during the middle of the crisis. "I don't remember anything about it, but...if these were purely intelligence missions, he didn't have to get approval, because NSCID 5 gave the Agency the right to run intelligence operations without going around [checking with] the Government." Helms/McAuliffe OH, 6. Kent later wrote that the erroneous estimate made the next year of his life "really hideous. McCone never let me forget...." The DCI did not fire Kent, however, perhaps because he "had to admit in his heart of hearts that his argument...was not based on concrete facts, but was more an intuitive hunch....and that, considering the available information, the paper had come out just about the way that it ought to have been written, even though it was incorrect." "Reminiscences of a Varied Life," 262–63. ~~✗~~

⁵⁵ The ExComm did not know about another incident—revealed in 2002—that, in combination with the other events of 27 October, might have precipitated superpower hostilities. A US Navy destroyer enforcing the quarantine dropped depth charges on a Soviet submarine, unaware that the vessel was armed with a nuclear torpedo. The Soviet officers on the submarine thought they were under attack and almost retaliated by firing the torpedo at the destroyer. ABC News "Nightline" broadcast, 12 October 2002, Nexis doc. no. ON30331353; "Recollections of Vadim Orlov (USSR Submarine B-59)....," in National Security Archive, "The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A Political Perspective after 40 Years," accessed at the National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/press3.html; "Soviet Submariner 'Saved the World' in Cuban Crisis," *Times (London)*, 14 October 2002, Nexis doc. no. ON29768871. Two other incidents on the 27th, not discussed by the ExComm, also could have led to a Soviet miscalculation and an American overreaction: the US Air Force test launched an unarmed ICBM from a site alongside armed ICBMs; and the US military received a false early warning radar report, supposedly of a missile launched from Cuba toward the US mainland. Stern, *Averting the 'Final Failure'*, 308 n. 275. (U)

⁵⁶ Stern, *Averting the 'Final Failure'*, 345, 357–58, 362; ExComm meeting on 27 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 461–63, 472–74. McCone speculated that the second Soviet communication included the demand about the missiles in Turkey because the US ambassador's earlier talks with Ankara about them had been divulged to the Kremlin, possibly through espionage. *Ibid.*, 445. (U)

McCone and several other ExComm members were not aware that the president and the attorney general were doing exactly what the DCI had just advised them not to: trading away the Jupiters. After the 1600 ExComm meeting broke up over three hours later, President Kennedy gathered eight of its 17 members in the Oval Office to discuss briefly what Robert Kennedy should say about the Jupiters in a private conversation with Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin that evening. McCone—with his adamant opposition to an overt swap on the record—was not included, even though he had attended both previous sessions of the full ExComm that day. Only Bundy, Rusk, McNamara, Sorensen, Ball, Thompson, Gilpatric, and the attorney general were present when, according to Bundy, they agreed that “while there could be no deal over the missiles in Turkey, the president was determined to get them out and would do so once the Cuban crisis was resolved.” The group “agreed without hesitation that no one not in the room was to be informed of this additional message.” While the president responded to Khrushchev’s first missive and ignored the second—agreeing, upon verification that the missiles had been withdrawn, to “remove promptly the quarantine measures...and give assurances against an invasion of Cuba”—Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin that the Jupiters would be taken out within several months but not explicitly as part of an agreement about the missiles in Cuba.⁵⁷ (U)

Together the two moves worked to end the crisis. In a letter to the president the next morning, Khrushchev agreed to “dismantle the arms which you described as offensive, and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union.” McCone was on his way to Sunday Mass when he heard on his car radio that the Soviets were going to make an important announcement within the hour. He later said it was the longest Mass he ever attended. When he learned of Moscow’s standdown after leaving church, “I could hardly believe my ears.” He then went to an 1100 ExComm meeting with the president. The members recommended that Kennedy respond favorably and publicly to the announce-

ment, even though the official text had not arrived. “Decision made to release a brief statement welcoming the K message,” McCone wrote. The US government’s formal response was sent to Khrushchev later that afternoon. The most perilous phase of the missile crisis had passed peacefully.⁵⁸ (U)

Verify, Then Trust (U)

Senior DI officer R. Jack Smith recalled that after the missile crisis, the CIA “went back to the standard flow of international events, an Iraqi coup here, a Soviet provocation there, a governmental collapse there.”⁵⁹ In the weeks and months after the “Thirteen Days,” however, there was still much crisis-related business for McCone, the Agency, and the administration. As Dean Rusk had cautioned on 28 October, “it is not yet the time to say this is over.” Although the threat of imminent war had passed, and the pace and urgency of activity diminished, the crisis would not really end until late November. By then, most of the modalities for implementing the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement—in particular, defining “offensive weapons”—were in place. The Soviets were dismantling and removing their offensive missiles from Cuba, US Navy vessels were checking the Russian ships carrying them, the Air Force was flying reconnaissance missions over the island, and the United Nations would inspect the missile sites. After three weeks of talks and fulminations, a Kremlin envoy persuaded an embittered Castro to release the Soviet IL-28 medium bombers, after which the blockade was lifted. (U)

In the meantime, the US government was making arrangements with Turkey and Italy for phasing out the Jupiter missiles in their territory. Lastly, American and Soviet negotiators agreed on most issues, such as withdrawals of troops and other weapons. However, Washington dropped its no-invasion pledge from the final settlement that President Kennedy had announced on 20 November

⁵⁷ Kai Bird, *The Color of Truth: McGeorge Bundy and William Bundy*, 238; Bundy, 432–33; Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, 141–43; Department of State telegram to US Embassy in Moscow, DEPTTEL 1015, 27 October 1962, and Robert Kennedy untitled memorandum to Rusk, 30 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 268–71; Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, 108–9; Allyn et al., “Essence of Revision,” 164. The missile trade meeting remained secret for over a quarter-century until McGeorge Bundy revealed it in his memoir. Besides McCone, Dillon, Lyndon Johnson, U. Alexis Johnson, Lyman Lemnitzer, Nitze, Walt Rostow, Taylor, and Donald Wilson had attended the 1600 meeting but were not invited to the small gathering afterward. McCone and Taylor returned for another ExComm meeting at 0900. When the DCI brought up his still unacted upon letter from earlier in the day—not knowing that the RFK-Dobrynin meeting had rendered it moot—the president brushed him off with the comment, “We’ve got enough messages right now, John.” Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 380. (U)

⁵⁸ Khrushchev message to the president, 28 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 279–83; McCone’s notes, “National Security Council Meeting—Executive Committee, October 28—11:00 a.m.,” *CMC Documents*, 345. In appreciation of the ExComm’s work, President Kennedy gave each member a commemorative silver calendar of the month of October, with highlighted engraving of the 13 days from the 16th to the 28th. Each calendar, prepared by Tiffany’s, was inscribed with the initials of the president and the individual recipient. Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 403. (U)

⁵⁹ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 188. (U)

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because Castro had negated part of the 27–28 October deal by refusing to allow on-site inspections. Afterward, the Intelligence Community monitored Moscow's compliance through all-source collection against a wide range of Soviet and Cuban targets, and the ExComm continued to meet for several months. By early February, the community concluded that the Soviets had withdrawn all strategic weapons and 5,000 of what were thought to be about 22,500 military personnel from Cuba and dismantled the offensive missile sites.⁶⁰ (U)

During this period, McCone became ensnared in several policy and bureaucratic controversies over verification of Soviet adherence to the agreement and interpretation of Soviet activities involving Cuba. In addition to giving regular intelligence briefings to the ExComm, he also served as a one-man warning committee, presenting pessimistic forecasts—some based on CIA analyses, some derived from his own interpretations—about Khrushchev's and Castro's intentions in the Western Hemisphere. He conveyed judgments that the missile crisis had left Cuba stronger militarily; that Soviet support for Castro would remain the same or increase as Khrushchev tried to demonstrate that he had not betrayed a revolutionary ally; and that the Soviets would still use Cuba as an outpost from which to threaten US interests in the region. Because they had put the SAMs in Cuba to protect the offensive missiles, their retention of the SAMs meant that they intended to redeploy offensive missiles. As the weeks passed, he described the situation as “ominous.” Moscow might even “replace Castro and his regime with their own people, thus producing a true satellite from where the Soviets could effectively operate against established governments in Latin America.” Except for Vice President Lyndon Johnson, McCone noted at one point, ExComm

members “did not seem disposed to go as far” in their assessments as he did.⁶¹ (U)

McCone made sure that whenever he was away from Headquarters, his concerns about Soviet designs in Cuba were transmitted to senior policymakers instead of being held at Langley as they had been during his honeymoon the previous summer. While on a trip [redacted] in February 1963, for example, McCone warned Carter of several signs that the Soviets might be reintroducing offensive missiles into Cuba—unexplained construction activity and cargo shipments, and unacceptable disarmament proposals, among others—that, in his view, could not be rationalized away by lack of corroborating evidence. He told the DDCI to forward his message to Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, and all USIB members. There was to be no repeat of the disconnect that occurred with the “honeymoon cables.”⁶² (U)

As it had before, the White House employed McCone as its emissary to the Republican Party to short circuit GOP criticism and as a back-channel intermediary with the press to give intelligence “spin” to stories. After briefing Eisenhower in early November, the DCI dismissed Ike's criticisms of the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev as “reflect[ing]...the views of fault-finding politicians,” although he himself did not fully support the administration's approach. With the president's assent, McCone released aerial photography of Cuba to the press to substantiate administration claims about the Soviet withdrawal. In response to numerous press reports about Cuba sourced to refugees, President Kennedy directed McCone to encourage media outlets to verify such reports and not just print them as received. McCone passed on the assignment to Carter, Helms, and CIA's public affairs officer. The DDCI and the DDP both responded that this was not an appropriate task

⁶⁰ The immediate postcrisis period is well covered in Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, chaps. 22–24; Fursenko and Naftali, chap. 15; and Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, chap. 19. President Kennedy's 20 November announcement is in *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 461–63. McCone was one of several NSC members who argued for dropping the no-invasion pledge. Without the quarantine, they reasoned, the United States had no other leverage against the Soviet Union. Stern, *Averting the “Final Failure”*, 410. The Soviet presence in Cuba as of early 1963 is outlined in “Senators Report Soviet Build-up in Cuba Continues,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; McCone's notes for a congressional leadership briefing in January, and his public statement on the military situation in Cuba in February, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII, American Republics; Cuba 1961–1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 592 and 613. A snapshot of the situation a few months later is provided in OCI Memorandum 1544/63, “Soviet Forces in Cuba,” 7 May 1963, National Security Files, Country Series, Cuba-Subject, Intelligence Material, Vol. IV, JFK Library. Khrushchev pledged to Castro that one Soviet brigade would remain in Cuba. The administration realized that those troops, along with delivery systems for short-range nuclear weapons, would stay as long as it withheld a no-invasion pledge. The US government's “discovery” of the Soviet ground unit in 1979 caused a temporary crisis in relations with Moscow. David Coleman, “After the Cuban Missile Crisis: Why Short-Range Nuclear Weapons Delivery Systems Stayed in Cuba,” *Miller Center Report* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2002): 36–39. (U)

⁶¹ McCone, “Problems We Face in the Future in Cuba,” 5 November 1962, “Long Term Outlook for Cuba,” 13 November 1962, message to Bundy, 25 November 1962, untitled memorandum to the president, 3 December 1962, untitled memorandum to Bundy, 5 December 1962, memorandum of meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and Ball on 5 February 1963, and untitled memorandum to Rusk, 13 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 377, 445–46, 530, 574, 694, 698–99; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...November 10, 1962...,” and “Memorandum of Executive Committee Meeting, November 12, 1962,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 513 and 519. (U)

⁶² McCone message to Rusk, 13 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 698–99; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 13 February 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1. (U)

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for the Agency, but the DCI told them to do it anyway. In another of many illustrations of White House sensitivity to press coverage of Cuba, McCone complained to publisher Henry Luce about a single word in a *Time* story that supposedly exaggerated an event that could be interpreted as making the administration look bad.⁶³ ~~(S)~~

McCone and CIA armed US negotiator John J. McCloy with thorough and timely intelligence on Cuba for use in his talks with Vasiliy Kuznetsov, the Soviet first deputy minister of foreign affairs, on the details of the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement.⁶⁴ The DCI, in turn, was kept informed of progress in the discussions by McCloy, Bundy, and the Department of State. He thought the United States should extract as many concessions as it could from the Soviets because it was negotiating from a position of preponderant strength, and he feared that the administration might be too accommodating. He certainly would have approved of the decision to have McCloy—the archetypical Eastern establishment figure, with a lengthy record of prominent service in government and business, and a reputation as a tough bargainer—lead the US negotiators instead of the “soft” Adlai Stevenson. (McCone may have recommended McCloy to the president for this assignment.) ~~(S)~~

The DCI did not want the administration, which had already surrendered some of its diplomatic initiative to the United Nations, to find itself forced into acceding to new conditions to enable Khrushchev to save face after “betraying” Castro. He did not believe the United States would have to go as far as allowing Soviet inspection of American facilities in return for US inspections of Soviet offensive missile sites in Cuba, nor did he regard a categorical “no invasion” pledge as wise or necessary. In addition, McCone was concerned that the White House would not insist that

the Soviets deactivate their SAM sites in Cuba. He regarded the Soviets’ insistence that the SAMs be left operational—and later indications that they were improving their air defense systems in Cuba—as signs that they intended to prevent US reconnaissance aircraft from detecting any redeployment of offensive missiles on the island. He advised the administration to “devise diplomatic moves” to prevent a U-2 shootdown that might lead to a US military operation against Soviet forces in Cuba. ~~(S)~~

The DCI disapproved of UN-controlled inspections of the missile sites—he wanted American officials to have the main role—and he would not allow US intelligence capabilities to be compromised in the process of verifying the Soviet withdrawal. To begin with, he refused to give the United Nations aerial photographs of the missile sites unless a US official accompanied the UN inspectors to Cuba. The head of the UN delegation, Acting Secretary General U Thant, insisted that only representatives of neutral countries participate in the inspections. As a compromise, the US mission to the UN proposed that a notebook containing aerial photographs be prepared for a briefing of U Thant’s military adviser by a US military expert. McCone agreed, but he would not let the UN official take the photographs to Cuba. (Instead, the official clipped pictures of them from the *New York Times* and other newspapers.)⁶⁶ (U)

A related but larger issue was the UN’s lack of high-level photoreconnaissance aircraft or photointerpretation ability. Of the countries participating in the proposed verification procedures, only the United Kingdom had pilots and analysts trained to work with other than low- or medium-level photography. McCone argued against making the U-2 available to the UN and proposed instead that it be assigned older or obsolete US Air Force reconnaissance aircraft and

⁶³ McCone, “Memorandum of Conversation Between President Kennedy and Former President Eisenhower,” 17 November 1962, Smith, “Summary Record of the 31st Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council,” 29 November 1962, McCone, “Memorandum for the Record... Executive Committee of NSC Meeting... 29 November [1962],” and Smith, “Summary Record of the 509th National Security Council Meeting,” 13 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 478–79, 541, 543, 717; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record... Briefing of General Eisenhower, 7 November 1962—Gettysburg,” and Bundy, “NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 12, 1962...,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 502 and 516; “Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 39,” 31 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIII, West Europe and Canada*, 163; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record... News Report in the *Evening Star* as of 6 November [1962],” ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4. McCone’s call to Luce was prompted by the White House’s annoyance that the word “flood” overstated the number of persons returning to Cuba from the United States, and implied that the victims of Castro’s tyranny thought something was wrong with US policy toward the Cuban regime. ~~(S)~~

⁶⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, “Memorandum for the Record... Discussion with Mr. Bundy...,” 5 November 1962, untitled memorandum to the president, 3 December 1962, and untitled memorandum to Bundy, 5 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 375–76, 574, 582–83; McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting of Executive Committee of the NSC, November 5, 1962,” “Memorandum for the Record... Discussion with Secretary Rusk on... November 10, 1962...,” and letter to Bundy, 22 November 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XII/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 492, 513, and 552; Bundy message to McCone with attachment, 24 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 319–20, 492. ~~(S)~~

⁶⁶ Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 502. (U)

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aerial cameras. After some debate over who in the US government really was in charge of air assets, the Joint Chiefs reluctantly accepted McCone's suggestion.⁶⁷ (U)

Although aerial reconnaissance was vital to monitoring the Soviet withdrawal, McCone was bothered that the administration appeared to be relying on it too heavily and might be willing to negotiate away the politically more sensitive process of on-site inspection. "We seem to be drifting into a frame of mind that high-level photography is all we need, that it will show everything that must be seen, that it is preferable to on-site inspection, that really on-site inspection is undesirable because it would be impartially conducted and...would automatically end over-flights...." Overflights could not, for example, confirm or dispel persistent reports that the Soviets had hidden missiles in caves; only on-site inspections and on-the-ground clandestine reporting could. Accordingly, McCone told Helms that he wanted an all-out HUMINT attack against the Cuban target, to include "all incoming and outgoing shipping, commerce, aircraft, personnel and material...all military activities on the island, all security activities, as well as governmental affairs," and using the "highest possible level" of third country cooperation achievable to obtain that coverage. In keeping with a presidential directive, any refugee reporting about offensive missiles was to be sourced as carefully as possible and acted upon quickly if deemed reliable and useful. Soon after the new year, Bundy chided McCone by observing that an English journalist had scooped CIA on the missile story and suggested the Agency needed to collect intelligence on Cuba more aggressively. The DCI promptly-directed Carter and Helms to develop "an imaginative program" that developed assets other than Task Force W's.

The overflight question proved to be persistent. McCone grew increasingly dissatisfied with the way policy considerations influenced decisions on intelligence collection against Cuba. At almost every ExComm meeting in early 1963, he argued—usually without success—for more low-level overflights. "I took the position," he wrote later, "that the Intelligence Community felt that they [redacted]

[redacted] that we knew all there was to know about what was going on in Cuba." He wanted regular low-level missions as a standard collection method, but the administration preferred to use them only when [redacted] indicated they were needed against a specific target. He regarded this as self-defeating. The administration wanted to avoid two situations: provoking a diplomatic incident while the Soviet withdrawal and the Bay of Pigs prisoner negotiations were underway, and giving the Soviets an opportunity to create a "controlled crisis" and regain the diplomatic initiative. Yet, ill-informed decisions and rash actions were far more likely without adequate intelligence to appraise reports of nefarious Soviet activity. The DCI believed CIA could best dodge the trap by sidestepping policy considerations and adopting a posture of pure objectivity. "We should not let our recommendations concerning...intelligence collection be controlled by our own unilateral judgment or opinion of the policy implications for which others have both responsibility and authority," he told the DDCI.⁶⁹ ~~X~~

McCone did not endorse the procedure for planning Cuban overflights that was in place as of January 1963 because he believed CIA's role was too limited. After USIB's Committee on Reconnaissance (COMOR) chose the targets, SAC programmed all the flights and informed NPIC and DIA of the planned routes. The only Agency input in this process came from CIA's member on the COMOR;

⁶⁷ Ibid., 509–10. Low-flying aerial reconnaissance of Cuba afforded McCone a humorous opportunity to explain to President Kennedy the difference between an "occupied" and "unoccupied" missile site. He elicited a booming laugh when, to illustrate the former, he showed the president a photograph of an open-roofed, three-hole latrine with a Soviet soldier sitting inside. Ibid., 522–23. (U)

⁶⁸ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee of NSC Meeting...29 November [1962,]" and "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee Meeting—10 Dec 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 543, 610; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Executive Meeting of the NSC...3 Nov '62," and Bundy, "NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 12, 1962...," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI/XI/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 485 and 516; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...News Report in the *Evening Star* as of 6 November [1962,]" ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; Carter untitled memorandum to Helms, Action Memorandum No. A-112, 21 November 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 15; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting between DCI and Mr. Bundy...," 11 January 1963, and [redacted]

[redacted] prugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 560–61; Carbonell, 227–29. The Intelligence Community did not conclude until mid-April 1965 that the Soviets had not concealed nuclear missiles in Cuba. "No IRBMs Remain in Cuba, US Says," *New York Times*, 15 April 1965, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 3, HIC. ~~X~~

⁶⁹ McCone, "Meeting with the President, Rusk, McCone, McNamara, and Bundy, 25 April [1963], to discuss low-level overflights," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 785–86; ONE memorandum to McCone, "Probable Soviet Reaction to US Retaliation After Shoot-down of a U-2 Reconnaissance Aircraft over Cuba," 26 April 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 3; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 9 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5. ~~X~~

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there was no Seventh Floor review of the resulting decisions. Moreover, the JCS chairman ordered an overflight suspension during Christmas 1962 without telling his civilian superiors or the DCI. McCone, noting that he and USIB would bear the responsibility for a future intelligence failure, indicated for the record that he wanted to control the overflight process through the new National Reconnaissance Office, which would plan the missions, with the Joint Chiefs and SAC carrying them out.⁷⁰ ~~SECRET~~

McCone also thought mission plans should emphasize quality of coverage over quantity. In keeping with the administration's emphasis on avoiding a shootdown, many flights were being aborted as soon as Soviet radar "painted" them. McCone believed the Soviets would interpret this practice as a sign of weakness, so he thought it would be better to fly fewer missions that covered more territory and completed their routes instead of withdrawing as soon as radar tracked them. Reducing the number of missions also would enable NPIC interpreters to scrutinize the growing volume of images more carefully. At the same time, McCone (joined by the Joint Chiefs and USIB) recommended against suspending low-level reconnaissance flights because they were needed for intelligence collection and psychological warfare. He believed the situation in Cuba was threatening because the Soviets' moves were more provocative and costly than necessary if they intended only to control Castro and keep Cuba as a base for subverting Latin America. In early February, McCone and the JCS agreed to recommend to the president that control of each overflight rest with the secretary of defense and the DCI (or in their absence, their respective senior deputies). The president turned them down.~~SECRET~~

The case of the Soviet cargo ship *Zelenskiy* typified the bureaucratic maze McCone had to run to obtain the intelli-

gence he thought the administration needed to assess Soviet intentions in Cuba.⁷¹ The episode also highlighted the limits on his authority to direct Intelligence Community activity. In early February 1963, CIA analysts reported that the Cuba-bound *Zelenskiy* appeared to be carrying military hardware. McCone wanted low-level photography of the ship after it docked in Mariel on the seventh or eighth. He was especially insistent after two U-2 flights on the eighth did not reveal enough about the ship's mission and the take from a third flight would not be read out until the ninth. He contacted Gen. Taylor, who questioned whether there was enough evidence to justify low-level missions. But he said he would agree to low-level flights if they were part of a battery of flights he had recommended but which the president and secretary of defense had just rejected. McCone then called McNamara, who disagreed with the Agency's assessment of the ship's cargo, was not concerned about military hardware shipments, would not recommend low-level flights, and concluded that the decision, being "political," was the president's. Next, Bundy told McCone that the president more or less had left the decision to the two of them; Bundy was inclined to run a low-level mission.~~SECRET~~

Early on the ninth, Arthur Lundahl reported from NPIC that imagery from the last U-2 mission of the day before revealed that unidentified crates, including some 35 feet long and seven feet wide, had been unloaded from the *Zelenskiy*. Over McNamara's and Taylor's objections but with Rusk's and Bundy's concurrence, McCone recommended an immediate low-level mission over Mariel. At this point, the subject disappears from McCone's records, suggesting that the mission was not conducted or that US suspicions were not proven or that other matters took precedence.⁷² ~~SECRET~~

⁷⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara...," 8 January 1963, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in Mr. Bundy's office—12 January 1963...," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the Joint Chiefs...," 1 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum about meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and Ball on 5 February 1963, and NSAM No. 208, "Guidelines for the Planning of Cuban Overflights," 4 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 590–91, 694; McCone untitled memorandum to Taylor, 1 February 1963, and memorandum about ExComm meeting on 5 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 609 and 614; Committee on Reconnaissance, "Memorandum for the United States Intelligence Board...Requirements for Low-Level Reconnaissance of Cuba," 21 February 1963, doc. 621 in *ibid.*~~SECRET~~

⁷¹ McCone, "Memorandum...The Ship, Kimik Zelenskiy," 9 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4.~~SECRET~~

⁷² In January and February 1963, another Soviet ship headed for Cuba, the *Simferopol*, attracted the administration's attention when it was suspected of carrying military equipment. McCone and the COMOR recommended that the ship be subjected to round-the-clock photography at four-hour intervals, but the cautious president authorized only high-level surveillance. Smith, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President—Cuba Aerial Reconnaissance," 12 January 1963, and "Summary Record of the 40th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 5 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 663–64, 691; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion during a meeting with the President of Cuban aerial reconnaissance," 12 January 1963, and untitled memorandum to Bundy, 15 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 595 and 596; McCone memorandum about ExComm meeting on 5 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; "Report on Cuba Notes Significant Arms Cargo," *Washington Sunday Star*, and "Arms Cargo to Cuba Reported," *Washington Post*, both 27 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC.~~SECRET~~

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After Castro released a group of American detainees in April 1963 (see Chapter 6), McCone saw no reason to continue restricting low-level overflights. Over McNamara's opposition, he persuaded the president to authorize a limited schedule of missions. To preempt the charge that he was just trying to expand the intelligence inventory, McCone directed DDCI Carter to develop a target list based on specific and immediate collection needs—for example, areas that had gone unsurveyed for up to two weeks at a time. The president halted low-level missions while Castro was visiting Moscow in late May, but the overflights resumed in early June. McCone noted that McNamara and Gilpatric “disassociated themselves from any recommendations for low-level photography”—presumably so the DCI would be blamed if an American spy aircraft were shot down.⁷³

McCone eventually lost the fight for Cuban overflights. In September 1963, U-2 missions over Cuba were cut back from weekly to biweekly, full coverage of the island was to be achieved every 14 days rather than every seven, and daily low-level flights were no longer required. The restrictions may seem hard to reconcile with the fact that the United States was conducting a sizable covert war against Castro at the same time; presumably aerial reconnaissance would have helped track its progress. The administration's judgment may have been that the coverage was adequate to monitor the effects of sporadic operations and that running risks with high-profile aerial activity was hard to square with the need to maintain deniability for covert actions.⁷⁴

The Intelligence Failure Flap (U)

Many scholars and officials have long regarded the Cuban missile crisis as the high point of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy and of CIA's history and

McCone's directorship.⁷⁵ As crisis coordinator for the Intelligence Community, McCone had enabled the Agency to demonstrate its expertise at collecting and analyzing all-source reporting and at producing timely updates and assessments. The new and improved analytic apparatus he had initiated “got the critical evidence [U-2 photos and Penkovskiy's reports] in time for the president to digest it in private,” according to Ray Cline, and enabled CIA to regain some of the stature it had lost because of the Bay of Pigs. The intelligence triumph McCone and the Agency claimed to have scored soon turned into political and bureaucratic tribulation, however. In the words of a CIA officer at the time, “the wolves had...begun to howl about intelligence shortcomings [even] during the period prior to the crisis.”⁷⁶ (U)

The postmortem of CIA's handling of the missiles in Cuba confronted McCone with one of the most difficult political and managerial problems of his directorship. He had to answer legitimate and opportunistic complaints from the White House, antagonists in the community, the increasingly intrusive PFIAB, overseers in Congress, and second-guessers in the media. While giving due credit for the Agency's essential contributions in resolving the crisis (especially NPIC, which he formally commended), he had to acknowledge its lapses. The problem was amorphous, “a failure...of imagination,” as Roger Hilsman later put it, “a failure to probe and speculate, to ask perceptive questions of the data, rather than of explaining away the obvious.” McCone had to propose changes in procedures and organization that would prevent a recurrence without appearing to have succumbed to political pressure, engaged in a superficial public relations exercise, or adopted a series of quick fixes. At the same time, McCone was not about to let himself be tied to the failings of other officials and departments,

⁷³ McCone, “Memorandum of Discussion of Low-Level Flight Over Cuba...,” 21 May 1963, and “Discussions at Special Meeting of the Special Group (5412), 28 May 1963,” McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4; McCone, “Meeting with the President, Rusk, McCone, McNamara, and Bundy, 25 April [1963], to discuss low-level overflights,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 785–86; McCone memorandum to Special Group, “Low-Level Reconnaissance of Cuba,” 25 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 669. The administration's caution regarding Cuba also inhibited intelligence collection against other targets such as Indonesia, and McCone made the same case against limiting overflights for diplomatic reasons. He was the only member of the Special Group to support overflights of Indonesia; the others did not want to aggravate the administration's sensitive relations with President Sukarno. As with Cuba, McCone noted that USIB—including the Department of State's representative—requested the reconnaissance flights, and he reserved the right to appeal an adverse Special Group decision directly to the president. McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412—31 January 1963,” McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5.

⁷⁴ McCone memorandum to USIB Executive Secretary on Cuban overflight program, 25 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 18; McCone memorandum to chairman of COMOR, 25 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 710.

⁷⁵ From the broader perspectives of strategic theory and the management of national security policy, however, political scientist Eliot A. Cohen asked in 1986 “whether the uniqueness of the crisis does not destroy its value as an archetype, or worse, make it a profoundly misleading subject for reflection.... The Cuban Missile Crisis is and will remain singularly unrepresentative of postwar crises, and it offers precious little historical guidance for American statesmen today.” Cohen, “Why We Should Stop Studying the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *National Interest*, Winter 1986: 3–13 (quotes on 5, 6). (U)

⁷⁶ Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 197; “Memorandum for the Record...Daily White House Staff Meeting—31 October 1962,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 319. An early critical assessment from an informed outsider was Hanson W. Baldwin, “An Intelligence Gap: Experts Ask if Reports on Cuba Were Poor or Adapted to Policy,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC. (U)

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especially because his own prediction about Soviet plans had proven to be true. His reproaches of CIA subordinates and community officers and his combative responses to outside criticisms made it appear at times that he was more interested in protecting himself and finding scapegoats than in trying to rectify problems in the intelligence process. In the most illustrative example of this tendency, several Agency officers have vividly recounted—in words and phrases such as “browbeaten,” “failing away,” “tonguelashed,” and “cut to ribbons”—a USIB meeting at the East Building in which McCone went around the table berating the members for their departments’ errors during the crisis but saving his worst invective for Marshall Carter.⁷⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone’s accurate assessment of the Soviet missiles did not enhance his standing with administration officials, who came to resent him. Some of their antipathy was explainable by the “voice in the wilderness” quality of McCone’s conclusion and the intrepid insightfulness that outside observers and CIA apologists attributed to him after the fact. Bundy reportedly remarked to an Agency official, “I’m so tired of listening to McCone say he was right, I never want to hear it again.” After the president told McCone, “You were right all along,” McNamara—with a nod of agreement from Rusk—said, “But for the wrong reasons.” Years later, McCone recalled that “there was a good deal of tension in high levels of the government and for that reason I didn’t ask McNamara what he meant by that. I wish I had.” (When Walter Elder did pose the question, McNamara replied, “I don’t know. I had to say something.”) Lyman Kirkpatrick suspected that Pentagon officials—particularly McNamara—privately criticized McCone for not predicting the crisis “hard enough” in order to divert attention from their own analytical lapses. In defending the administration, Robert Kennedy claimed in 1965 that McCone trumpeted his ana-

lytical acumen in government circles to divert questions about why CIA did not know about the missiles sooner. McCone’s sometimes self-congratulatory performance raised doubts about his political loyalties, especially when congressional Republicans used his postcrisis testimony before a Senate committee to support assertions that the administration had blundered. The attorney general later said that the DCI “is very careful of his own position.... I think he liked the President very much. But he liked one person more—and that was John McCone.... We all knew that John McCone was moving among senators and congressmen peddling this idea [that he had warned the president] because it got him off the hook.”⁷⁸ (U)

During the few months following the crisis, McCone fought several skirmishes with administration officials over CIA collection and analysis before and during the crisis. The curtailment of overflights in September became a special point of contention. The DCI took issue with several ExComm members who insisted that no CIA request for a reconnaissance mission in September had been denied. While that was literally true, McCone noted that administration qualms about causing a diplomatic incident had forced CIA to program flights away from the SAM sites that were shown later to be protecting the offensive missiles. The erroneous 19 September SNIE also came up repeatedly, as ExComm members questioned whether Agency analysts had overlooked or discounted HUMINT reporting on the missile deployment. McCone had to concede the point, saying that the judgment “prompted evaluators to downgrade the fragmentary reports” from refugees and liaison contacts in Cuba received in late September and early October 1962. Privately to the president, McCone admitted these lapses but offered assurances that they were neither serious nor “necessarily applicable to other danger spots throughout the world.”⁷⁹ ~~XX~~

⁷⁷ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 187; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 524; Carter-Knoche OH, 3–5; Halpern/McAuliffe OH, 20, 41–42, 44–45; Knoche, 470. After the meeting, according to Carter’s adjutant “Hank” Knoche, the DDCI told McCone privately that “he risked CIA’s demoralization and ruination by disowning his Agency associates” and offered to resign. “McCone listened and made no response.” Ibid. A more diplomatic debate between collectors and analysts took place in the pages of CIA’s in-house journal in late 1964; see J.J. Rumpelmayr, “The Missiles in Cuba,” and Harlow T. Munson and W.P. Southard, “Two Witnesses for the Defense,” *Studies* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 87–98. ~~XX~~

⁷⁸ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 162; Krock, *Memoirs*, 380; Schechter and Deriabin, 335, citing interviews with McCone and Elder on 29 August and 6 October 1988, respectively; Kirkpatrick/McAuliffe OH, 11–12; *Congressional Record—Senate*, 9 May 1963, 7731 ff.; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 14–16. Bundy’s annoyance with McCone in part may be attributed to his own embarrassment at missing the missile call. In a television interview held the same day that the MRBMs were discovered, he said: “I know there is no present evidence, and I think there is no present likelihood, that the Cubans and the Cuban Government and the Soviet Government would, in combination, attempt to install a major offensive capability.” Abel, 11. During the postmortems on the administration’s handling of the crisis, some White House officials claimed that Robert Kennedy predicted the Soviet missile deployment long before McCone did. In a 19 April 1961 memorandum to the president, Kennedy wrote: “The time has come for a showdown [with Castro] for in a year or two years the situation will be vastly worse. If we don’t want Russia to set up missile bases in Cuba, we had better decide now what we are willing to do to stop it.” *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 304. (U)

⁷⁹ McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Executive Committee of NSC Meeting...29 November 1962,” and “Memorandum of Discussion with President Kennedy,” 16 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 2; “Summary Record of the 14th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council...October 31, 1962...,” *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 320–21; “Memorandum for the Director...Your Briefings of the NSC Executive Committee,” 3 November 1962, *CMC Documents*, 355. ~~XX~~

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President Kennedy's panel of outside intelligence consultants—PFIAB—was dissatisfied with the judgment that although CIA had erred in not anticipating the offensive missile deployment, overall it had performed well before and during the crisis. The board notified McCone in mid-November that it wanted an all-source, community-wide review of collection and analysis of the Soviet buildup in Cuba. The DCI—who already had given such an accounting in early November—was touchy about PFIAB's monitoring role, and he became further annoyed when he learned that its executive secretary, J. Patrick Coyne, was in Miami talking about the crisis to Americans and Cubans involved in the Bay of Pigs operation (and who therefore might be biased against the Agency). McCone complained to the board that Coyne had no authority to interview CIA officers and assets and objected to Coyne's "general attitude of interfering with and criticizing destructively rather than helping the community." Clark Clifford and other PFIAB members strongly defended Coyne in principle, telling the DCI that the board's secretary or any other designee "could do anything they wished, or were directed [to] in pursuing the Board's basic responsibility." They admitted, however, that Coyne had exceeded his brief in Miami. This mutual prickliness would characterize McCone's and PFIAB's dealings throughout the missile crisis postmortem.⁸⁰ ~~SECRET~~

McCone wanted the community-wide review to permit the board to look ahead, not back—to address "not whether we could have done differently," an easy but not very useful critique, "but whether there were deficiencies which we could do something about"—that is, to identify practical improvements that could be made. He anticipated, however, that PFIAB would pay more attention to oversights and slip-ups than to systemic problems: analysts supposedly did not pay enough attention to clandestine reports about developments in Cuba; the DCI's admonition to corroborate agent reporting with other sources might have been construed so strictly as to have constituted suppression; USIB's management of satellite overflights during September was unimaginative; CIA Headquarters did not distribute the

"honeymoon cables" adequately; SAC's takeover of U-2 overflights was untimely and dubious.⁸¹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone previewed some preliminary findings at a meeting with the board in early December. His briefing and replies to questions emphasized the scope of HUMINT reporting the Agency had acquired on Cuba during the months before the crisis.

The DCI also addressed some problems with aerial reconnaissance that arose during September and October.⁸² ~~SECRET~~

The massive report that McCone carefully reviewed and presented to PFIAB on 26 December—a 48-page synopsis and evaluation of intelligence activities between 14 April and 22 October 1962, plus four volumes of documentary annexes, together measuring four inches thick—addressed those points and more. After identifying the now-familiar errors, the DCI's report gave the community a generally good grade. The impression the sheer bulk of material left was that, for the most part, the agencies collected the right kinds of information on the proper targets and prepared and disseminated reports, bulletins, and analyses to policymakers in a timely fashion. The report even went so far as to posit that the *Soviets* committed the key intelligence errors: They had grossly underestimated US ability to detect offensive weapons in Cuba and seriously misjudged its resolve to get them withdrawn.⁸³ ~~SECRET~~

The after-action review did not accomplish what McCone wanted. He came away from a meeting with PFIAB on 27 December believing that the board thought the report was "more or less of a white-wash," and that CIA's lack of response to early information of Soviet military deployments in Cuba was "an intelligence failure which brought us close

⁸⁰ James R. Killian letter to McCone, 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11; Killian ~~SECRET~~ OH, 37; Kirkpatrick memoranda, "DCI's Briefing of President's Board...9 November 1962," and "Meeting with the President's Board...7 December 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at DCI Residence...attended by DCI and members of the President's Advisory Board..." 28 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. ~~SECRET~~

⁸¹ McCone memorandum to USIB principals, 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11. ~~SECRET~~

⁸² Elder untitled memorandum, 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1; McCone, "Notes for Mr. Earman," 17 December 1962, *ibid.*, box 4, folder 11; McCone, "Notes re Report to PFIAB re Cuba," 20 December 1962, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 3; chart titled "Clandestine Services Agents and Related Assets," attached to Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the PFIAB...7 December 1962," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~SECRET~~

⁸³ "Interim Report to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on Intelligence Community Activities Relating to the Cuban Arms Build-Up..." 26 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 20. The community report was drafted by an interagency working group chaired by CIA's Inspector General, John Earman, and comprising senior analytical officers or managers from the Agency, the Department of State, DIA, and NSA. ~~SECRET~~

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to disaster." Clifford wrote that McCone's praise for CIA's performance was a "snow job" and that "*estimators had limited themselves to preconceived notions*" about Soviet intent (emphasis in original). PFIAB was decidedly dissatisfied with the DCI's explanation of the reason the Agency did not pass on the instructions and opinions in his "honeymoon cables" to USIB and the White House. McCone—ironically, using Carter's self-defenses—said his views were personal judgments that the DI and BNE had rejected already and that Agency officers then in charge had access to "hard intelligence" not available to him when he wrote the cables. The board did not accept this "no official standing" rationale, which contradicted McCone's attempts elsewhere to portray himself as the only one in the administration to have made the right call from the first.⁸⁴ ~~SECRET~~

The DCI and the DDCI faced more pointed questioning from board members on 28 December. Addressing the inadequacies of HUMINT, McCone explained that MON-GOOSE teams collected intelligence on sabotage targets and possible resistance assets, not on Soviet military activities. Carter said the "honeymoon cables" were not deemed significant at the time they were received and that, in retrospect, he still would not have disseminated them to any policymaker who did not already know McCone's views on the subject.⁸⁵ ~~SECRET~~

Probably to take some of the sting out of PFIAB's forthcoming final report, McCone privately gave President Kennedy his own assessment of the Intelligence Community's performance during the crisis. The DCI met with the president during the latter's long Christmas vacation in Palm Beach, Florida, in early January 1963. He said the PFIAB report "called the glass of water half full, not half empty," and that although he believed the community had done a creditable job overall, it had made some notable collection oversights and analytical errors. "Failure to press aggressively [for an] overflight program between August 29th and October 14th...due to timidity throughout the government...for fear of a 'U-2 incident'...foreclosed earlier

detection of the existence of offensive missiles." In addition, because

of [a] conviction on the part of government officials and intelligence estimators that the Soviets would not accept the responsibility of a confrontation which would result from placing of offensive missiles in Cuba...the estimators and others in Government failed to fully evaluate many indicators which, if carefully analyzed, would lead to the conclusion that something more than defensive armament was going into Cuba. (U)

President Kennedy was less critical, noting that it was reasonable for community estimators to assume that the Soviets would not place themselves in a militarily indefensible position. "In general the president agreed with Sherman Kent's position that the Soviets made a bad guess as to our response" to the placement of the SAM sites. McCone might reasonably have concluded from these guardedly favorable comments that the White House would support him and the community in the upcoming conflict with PFIAB.⁸⁶ (U)

In its final report, issued on 4 February 1963, PFIAB clearly distinguished between the community's performance before and after 14 October 1962, when offensive missiles in Cuba were discovered. After that date, observed PFIAB, the community performed exceptionally well, especially in the areas of photographic surveillance and analysis, communications and electronics intelligence, and the application of earlier reporting on Soviet strategic missile and air defense installations to the Cuban situation. Before 14 October, however, PFIAB found the community's performance to have been seriously wanting. "In view of the fact that the Soviet move came dangerously close to success in an area less than ninety miles from our shores, the absence of useful early warning of the enemy's intention must be stressed." "The focused sense of urgency or alarm which might well have stimulated a greater effort" was lacking. "[T]he manner in which intelligence indicators were handled...may well be the most serious flaw in our intelligence system, and...if uncorrected, could lead to the gravest consequences."

⁸⁴ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at DCI Residence...attended by DCI and members of the President's Advisory Board...", 28 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Clifford, 358. ~~SECRET~~

⁸⁵ Kirkpatrick memoranda, "Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board..." "Meeting of Lieutenant General Marshall S. Carter...with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...", both 28 December 1962, and "The DCI's Report on His Dinner with the President's Board," 31 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~SECRET~~

⁸⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...5 January 1963," *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 651-53. (U)

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PFIAB did reach one positive conclusion of note: it found no evidence to support allegations that the administration had manipulated intelligence on the Soviet buildup for partisan political purposes. The White House benefited most from that finding, however; the blame for intelligence failures lay squarely with the community—and, by extension, the DCI.⁸⁷ ~~10~~

The PFIAB report raised McCone's ire. Diplomatically offering that he and USIB had "no basic disagreement" with "the general worth of the [board's] recommendations," he nevertheless stopped conceding and conciliating and took on the criticisms squarely. His most pointed rebuttal came in a memorandum to the president in late February. In it, he asserted that the community had "operated extensively and well" during the crisis. He reminded the president that "every major weapons system introduced into Cuba by the Soviets was detected, identified, and reported...before any one of these systems attained an operational capability." Even more impressively, this accomplishment occurred despite the extremely short time between the introduction of strategic weapons and their detection. Nonetheless, the intelligence cycle moved "with extraordinary rapidity through the stages of collection, analysis, targeting for verification, and positive identification." The gap in U-2 overflights "was not critical"; no photography taken before mid-October would have shown anything dire enough to warrant action that needed backing from NATO or the OAS. The lack of weight given to HUMINT on offensive missiles was understandable given that "for two years the Intelligence Community had been surfeited with reports of 'missiles in Cuba,' all of which proved to be incorrect prior to those which we received on or about September 20th." Only eight agent or refugee reports out of 3,500 reviewed were judged in retrospect to have been "reasonably valid indicators" of the offensive missile deployment.⁸⁸ ~~10~~

At the same time he was tilting with PFIAB, McCone had to placate congressional inquisitors looking into charges

that the administration had played politics with intelligence during the crisis and that CIA's missteps had helped create an intelligence gap. Some Republicans, disappointed over the results of midterm congressional elections in November, contended that the White House had delayed releasing evidence of the missiles until just before the elections in order to concoct a crisis so that voters would rally around the president and choose Democrats. The chairman of the Republican National Committee claimed that this purported manipulation of secrets had cost his party as many as 20 seats in the House of Representatives. To refute the allegations of chicanery, McCone shared the findings of the USIB after-action report with the CIA oversight committees and said that intelligence on Cuba "could not have been handled in any way which would have altered the final timing of the policy decisions."⁸⁹ (U)

From the House side of Capitol Hill, a member of the Armed Services Committee, Frank Osmers (R-NJ), claimed that rivalry between CIA and the Air Force over control of U-2 flights had impaired reconnaissance operations. This bureaucratic bickering, combined with the Agency's refusal to give credence to early HUMINT reports of offensive missiles, helped bring about the confrontation, Osmers contended. McCone's two-hour briefing to the committee in late March deflected the congressman's charges. The DCI explained that weather was always a factor in scheduling overflights; that the amount of reliable and actionable HUMINT from Cuba was only a tiny fraction of the entire intelligence picture; and (again using an argument he did not agree with) that U-2 incidents in East Asia during the summer prompted prudent cutbacks in operations. (McCone decided that, before this audience, it would be impolitic to go into the Air Force takeover of U-2 missions.) ~~10~~

After the briefing, Osmers declared himself convinced and retracted his allegations. Meanwhile, the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, chaired by CIA friend John C. Stennis (D-MS), released a favorable report

⁸⁷ PFIAB, "Memorandum for the President," 4 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11 (a sanitized version appears in *CMC Documents*, 361–71). ~~10~~

⁸⁸ McCone untitled memorandum to the president, 28 February 1963, *CMC Documents*, 373–76. In late January, Carter and USIB deputies had given McCone their responses to PFIAB's anticipated findings. McCone subsequently drew on many of those points. Carter memorandum to McCone, "Interim Report to the President by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," 21 January 1963, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, "Interim Report to the President by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...," 22 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 11; McCone, "Notes on Killian Board Recommendations," 25 March 1962, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 5. As intelligence scholar Gil Merom has keenly observed, "[b]y emphasizing the achievement of discovering the Soviet deployment before the ballistic missiles became fully operational, supporters of the Intelligence Community [such as McCone] turned anything short of massive intelligence disaster into a success." "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate," 50–51. ~~10~~

⁸⁹ Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 297; Haines and 101–2. The midterm elections went strongly in the Democrats' favor. They won 25 of 39 Senate seats (a net gain of four) and lost only four House races. Of course, McCone's proposition that an earlier warning of the missile deployment would *not* have affected the outcome of the crisis cannot be tested. (U)

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39. CIA Information Report, 27 September 1962

INFORMATION REPORT		INFORMATION REPORT	
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY			
This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.			
C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L			
COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]
SUBJECT	Possible Missile Site in Havana	DATE DISTR.	27 Sep 62
		NO. PAGES	2
		REFERENCES	[REDACTED]
DATE OF INFO.	To 12 Sep 62		
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	Havana/12 Sep 62		
THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION			
SOURCE	Cuban national, [REDACTED]		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> After dark on 12 Sep 62, I was driving east on Avenida 23, Marianao, Havana, when I observed and counted 20 Soviet trucks towing 20 long trailers going west on Avenida 23. The truck convoy was preceded by a jeep containing militiamen. The trucks were driven by Soviets in civilian clothes -- short-sleeved shirts in various colors. As the truck convoy neared its destination at Campo Libertad, the militia jeep was waved off, and the Soviet trucks and trailers proceeded into Campo Libertad. The trucks appeared to be the 6x6, ZIL-157, canvas-covered. [Source described these and later identified them from photographs [REDACTED]. In the backs of the trucks could be seen sealed black boxes or cases of various sizes. I do not know what these boxes contained. The trailers, the longest I have ever seen in Cuba, were two-axle, four-wheeled. They were about 65 to 70 feet in length and about eight feet in width. I believe the transport trailers were carrying large missiles, so long that the tail end extended over the end of the trailer. I would guess that the missiles were a few feet longer than the trailers. The missiles were covered with wood and canvas. From the tail end of the missile it looked as if the bottom and two sides of the missile had a wooden frame, and the entire missile was canvas-covered. It looked as if the tail end of the canvas silhouetted the two top fins of the four fins of the missile. The top of the canvas-covered missile was taller than the top of the truck towing it. I am not positive that the trailer was carrying 			
C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification </div>			
STATE	ARMY	NAVY	AIR
SEC	ACC		
INFORMATION REPORT		INFORMATION REPORT	

One of several agent reports from Cuba that PFIAB criticized CIA for discounting (U)

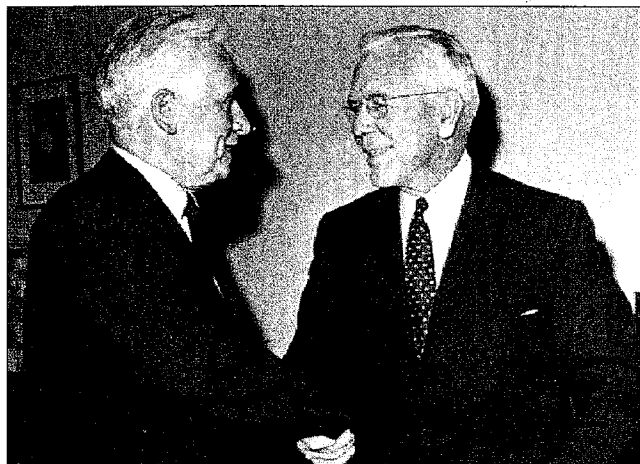
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CHAPTER 5

concluding that mistakes were inevitable in a crisis of such magnitude and that there had been no intelligence gap during September and October 1962. McCone had met with Stennis's subcommittee several times in the months after the crisis.⁹⁰ ~~XX~~

With few exceptions, congressional complaints about the Intelligence Community subsided. The most captious lawmaker was Sen. Keating, who assailed the administration for concealing evidence of Soviet moves in Cuba and other provocative military actions. McCone met with Keating three times during February 1963 to try to restrain the voluble senator. Over the president's objection that seeing the senator would "demean" the DCI, and that DIA Director Joseph Carroll should go instead, McCone insisted that he deal with Keating personally. When they met soon after, McCone rebutted, clarified, or caveated each of Keating's reports about Soviet military movements, facilities, and weapons deliveries but otherwise did not dissuade him from continuing his criticisms. The senator claimed that his new information did not come from Cuban refugees but resisted the DCI's prodding to reveal his sources. McCone cautioned Keating that some of the policies he was recommending to the White House, such as a quarantine on Soviet shipments of military supplies and petroleum, constituted acts of war. The senator replied that the administration should not minimize the Soviet threat and that the American public needed to be alerted to the danger.⁹¹ ~~XX~~



McCone and Kenneth Keating (U)

On the other side of the political spectrum, liberal Democrats in Congress closed ranks behind the administration, although a few expressed greater disquietude with McCone, perceiving in him a "wholly different orientation" toward the Cold War than the White House had. Some of these legislators had voted against his confirmation, and his close ties to the White House had not reconciled them to him. After Republicans like Keating praised McCone for being the only administration figure to predict what Moscow would do in Cuba, these Democrats (quoted in news stories without attribution) underscored what they saw as basic philosophical differences toward the Soviet threat between the DCI and the administration. One unidentified Democratic

⁹⁰ Merom, "The 1962 Cuban Intelligence Estimate," 103; US Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, *Investigations of the Preparedness Program; Interim Report on Cuban Military Build-up*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963; "Summary Record of the 509th National Security Council Meeting," 13 March 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 715-16; McCone, "Memorandum of discussion with the President...", 13 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3. ~~XX~~

⁹¹ Transcript of McCone-JFK telephone conversation, 6 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; John S. Warner (Legislative Counsel), "Memorandum for the Record... Meeting with Senator Kenneth B. Keating...", 8 February 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 331; McCone letter to Rusk, 9 February 1963, with undated attachment, "Position Paper on Cuba," DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 39," 31 January 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XIII, *Western Europe and Canada*, 163. Several newspaper articles on the McCone-Keating meetings can be found in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 6, and Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC. The contretemps with McCone and Keating was lampooned that March at the Gridiron Club roast, where capital politicians throw barbs at each other in an annual ritual of cathartic humor. An unidentified McCone impersonator, with a Kennedyesque inflection, sang this dirty about CIA and the "KIA" ("Keating Intelligence Agency"):

Before the revolution they used to sing and toil,
But now they're drinking Red Castro oil,
And the ruble talks, not the Yankee dollah,
Since the Bay of Pigs made us Yankees hollah!
We were all in the dark when the missiles came,
But election day and a U-2 plane
Tip us Yankees off to what it's all about,
So we hollah with vigah and he pulls them out.
But the situation is under control.
We got a secret plan to keep the cold war cold,
And the KIA of the GOP
Won't find out how this whole mess got to be.

"Ole Miss, CIA, JFK In-Laws All Roast in Gridiron Pan," *Washington Post*, 10 March 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC. ~~XX~~

~~SECRET~~*Into the Cuban Crucible (II): The Missile Crisis (U)*

legislator reportedly said that, while McCone "is absolutely sincere and honorable," he

[is] a crusader, a zealot who sees the Soviet problem in black and white, with no shadings in between. The administration has a different opinion of the Soviet problem. When Mr. McCone is urged in closed-door committee hearings to tell what he really thinks, subtle differences appear between his approach and the President's.

Some Democrats accordingly were concerned that the Republicans might use those perceived differences to criticize the administration's Cuba policy and hinted that McCone's political leanings might cause him to place his party's interests first.⁹² (U)

The administration's effort to dispel the charge of intelligence failure further strained McCone's relations with McNamara, whom he privately accused of disclosing secrets without permission and of encroaching on his authority. In early 1963, President Kennedy—eager to quell rumors that the Soviets had not withdrawn their nuclear missiles from Cuba—decided to release recent aerial reconnaissance photos of the missile sites. Originally intending to show the pictures on background only to the small group of reporters who covered Keating, the president decided at the last minute to have McNamara go on national television and present them to the American people. For two hours on the evening of 6 February, the secretary of defense and a DIA analyst displayed and explained dozens of blown-up aerial photos of the missile sites before and after the crisis. Although the briefing gave an unprecedented detailed look into the United States' "black" capabilities, it turned into an embarrassment. No pictures were shown for the period 5 September–14 October, raising again the question of whether the US government had blinded itself at the very time the nuclear weapons were arriving in Cuba. Furthermore, because no exact count of the missiles could be made even with the photographs, the administration could not

assure the public that all the nuclear weapons on the island had been or were being removed.⁹³ (U)

McCone was furious. Nobody in the administration had consulted him about the presentation, and he contended that the disclosure trespassed on his statutory obligation to protect sources and methods. He believed McNamara's statements undercut his own credibility with Congress by leaving a different impression about Soviet activities in Cuba than he had given that very afternoon in testimony before two CIA subcommittees. Furthermore, McCone thought that the televised briefing disclosed so many specifics that the community's collection capabilities may have been compromised. The release of so much information, he feared, would fuel speculation that the United States deployed the same intelligence assets against the Soviet Union and thus increase American vulnerability to denial and deception. To examine that possibility, he had an internal study prepared on the security aspects of intelligence briefings about the missiles in Cuba.⁹⁴ ~~SECRET~~

The White House played down the dispute. McGeorge Bundy implied that it was a teapot tempest that boiled down to word parsing and interpretive differences. He noted that McCone "was something between concerned and angry because some of Secretary McNamara's statements did not agree with some of his already on record," and he worried that the disagreement could result in "the first big, internal, high-level personality clash of this administration." About two weeks later, McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk met for two hours to establish basic talking points on US policy toward Cuba (using the rubrics "It was agreed that..." or "We agreed that...") and to decide who in the administration would say what to whom about the missile crisis. The Pentagon kept the controversy going, however, by claiming in late February that CIA was responsible for the five-week "picture gap" and then almost immediately withdrawing the comment. Some weeks later, one of Bundy's deputies decided that the McCone-commissioned study on briefings and security would not be shown to the

⁹² "Kennedy Backers Open Counterattack on Cuba," *Washington Evening Star*, 12 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Rowland Evans, "CIA Chief McCone Worries Congressional Democrats," *New York Herald Tribune*, 7 March 1963, "Keating Defends CIA For Cuba Crisis Role," *Baltimore Sun*, 5 March, and "CIA Used as 'Scapegoat' On Cuba, Keating Says," *Washington Post*, 5 March 1963, McCone clipping file, HIC. (U)

⁹³ Tom Wicker, "McNamara Insists Offensive Arms Are Out of Cuba," *New York Times*, 7 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 547, 562–63; Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 298–99; Alsop and Braden, 256–57; John T. Hughes and A. Denis Clift, "The San Cristobal Trapezoid," *Studies* 36, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 54–55; excerpts from McNamara's press conference in *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1962, 251–52. (U)

⁹⁴ "Statement on Cuba by Director of Central Intelligence," 6 February 1963, and "McCone's Statement on Cuba," *Washington Post*, 7 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; McCone untitled memorandum, 7 February 1963, ER Files, Job 65B00383R, box 2, folder 26; Carter untitled memorandum, 2 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8. The internal study included a quote-by-quote comparison of statements on Cuba by McCone, McNamara, and the president during early February 1963; ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5. ~~SECRET~~

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CHAPTER 5

president lest he "get the feeling that Mr. McCone was taking off after Mr. McNamara."⁹⁵ ~~(S)~~

This feuding troubled the president enough that he asked McCone to help mend relations within the community. The president felt "an attempt was being made to drive a division within the administration," particularly between CIA on one side and the Departments of Defense and State on the other, by encouraging an "interdepartmental row" over their performance during the crisis. He even thought that good news—the Stennis subcommittee's exoneration of the community—might be distorted into indirect criticism of the administration: Everyone knew mistakes were made, and if the community did not make them, then the White House, the Pentagon, and the Department of State must have. McCone assured the president that he would not allow CIA to get into an unproductive and ultimately self-defeating conflict with other community offices, but he was defensive about criticism of him and CIA and blamed PFIAB for a good deal of the controversy. As an example, he noted that the community had been acting on subjects covered in 13 of the board's 14 recommendations even before its investigation began and that the board knew that before it released its report. Kennedy advised McCone not to get into an altercation with PFIAB, saying he had decided not to circulate the report and had dismissed the entire matter. The DCI reluctantly agreed to do the same—though not until he aired his grievances with the board's chairman, Clark Clifford. After that, he left most PFIAB business to Marshall Carter.⁹⁶ ~~(S)~~

A Still Tarnished Image (U)

In contrast to how he portrayed his and CIA's accomplishments during the missile crisis inside the administration, McCone told Carter that for public consumption, "I would like both my personal role and the role of intelligence played down." Presumably he wanted to allay any suspicion that he

was using the media to benefit himself, the Agency, and, Washington rumor had it, the Republican Party. Favorable press commentary on his judgment appeared nonetheless, and the impression it left—reinforced by McCone's own maladroitness self-justification, such as reading excerpts from the "honeymoon cables" to the president—was pithily expressed by McGeorge Bundy: "[McCone] has a way of saving *his* skin."⁹⁷ ~~(S)~~

Controversy over McCone's and CIA's role in the missile crisis resulted in perhaps the most serious impediment to accomplishing his mission that a DCI can face: reduced access to the president. Thomas Powers has written that "McCone's contact with the president dwindled. It was understood around town that McCone saw Kennedy once a week, but this apparently ceased to be true after the missile crisis. He continued to work closely with the president's brother, but he lost his access to the president." McCone's calendars indicate that the frequency of his contact with President Kennedy did not diminish as much as Powers claims, but the quality of their relationship became less personal and more businesslike. As a consequence, according to Richard Helms, McCone dealt more frequently with Robert Kennedy. The two men had been friends before the crisis, but afterward the DCI cultivated the attorney general more assiduously as his entrée to the administration's inner circle. Despite those efforts, McCone still faced limits to his authority that the missile crisis only underscored. The dispute with the Air Force about U-2 flights over Cuba, the spat with McNamara, and the impact of the PFIAB report showed that, at least into early 1963, the assurances in the president's letter of January 1962 that McCone would be head of the Intelligence Community still represented intentions rather than realities. As one historian has noted, "[w]ith the CIA discredited for being wrong [in the September 1962 SNIE] and its director resented for being right, there was little prospect for a major advance in the Agency's standing."⁹⁸ (U)

⁹⁵ *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 694 n. 1; Bundy untitled memorandum to Rusk, 19 February 1963, *ibid.*, 702–5; Jules Witcover, "CIA Conceals 'Picture Gap,' Pentagon Says," *Washington Evening Star*, 27 February 1963, and John A. Goldsmith, "AF Intelligence Chief Denies Rift with CIA," *Washington Post*, 28 February 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Carter untitled memorandum, 2 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8. ~~(S)~~

⁹⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record... Meeting with the President... 4 March 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 713–15; McCone, "Memorandum of discussion with the President...," 13 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 631; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record... Discussion with the President... March 25th[, 1963,]" McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the File... Meeting with the President... 15 Apr 1963..." *ibid.*, folder 4; *idem*, "Memorandum for the Record... Discussion with Clark Clifford—14 May 1963," and attachments, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 6. ~~(S)~~

⁹⁷ McCone memorandum to Carter, "Press Contacts in Connection with the Cuban Crisis," 26 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; Marquis Childs, "Blank Spot in Cuban Picture," syndicated column in *Washington Post*, 4 March 1963, Cuban Missile Crisis clipping file, HIC; Stanley Grogan (OPA) untitled memorandum to McCone with attached *Chicago Tribune* clipping, 15 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record... Meeting with the President... 4 March 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 715; Michael R. Beschloss, ed., *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963–1964*, 267. ~~(S)~~

⁹⁸ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 162; McCone calendars; author's conversation with Helms, 23 April 1998; Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 137. (U)

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CHAPTER

6

Postlude to Crisis: Freedom Fighters and Silent Warfare (U)

During the year after the missile crisis, John McCone participated in formulating US policy and CIA operations in two major areas of American-Cuban relations: securing the release of the Cuban Brigade and developing a covert action and espionage program to replace MONGOOSE. Other areas of international conflict and bureaucratic controversy—notably Vietnam and overhead reconnaissance—drew his attention away from Cuba somewhat. The Kennedy administration remained as committed as ever to removing Fidel Castro from power, however. “Our ultimate objective with respect to Cuba,” McGeorge Bundy wrote in a policy memorandum in early December 1962, “remains the overthrow of the Castro regime and its replacement by one sharing the aims of the Free World.”¹ As a member of the NSC committee overseeing covert actions against Cuba, McCone necessarily had a large and influential part in devising the clandestine means to accomplish that goal. Although the US government had not formally pledged not to invade Cuba, overt military action was politically unfeasible after the missile crisis ended. The administration would have to rely even more on covert action than before the crisis. Meanwhile, to satisfy its moral obligations to the imprisoned fighters of the Bay of Pigs operation and to retain the support of Cuban expatriates in the United States—a vital part of its covert plans against Castro—the administration also continued efforts to win the release of the members of *La Brigada*. Drawing on his congressional and business contacts, McCone helped overcome political and financial obstacles that arose during those sensitive negotiations. (U)

Freeing *La Brigada*: Phase Two (U)

As the US-Soviet talks over the missiles proceeded, movement toward winning freedom for the Cuban Brigade

prisoners resumed. They had been potential victims of the crisis, but the administration secured their release largely because, having just stood up to the Soviet Union, it now did not have to fear charges of “appeasement” if it struck a deal with Castro. Moreover, informal lines of communication about the prisoners remained open between Washington and Havana during the “Thirteen Days.” Afterward, James Donovan and the Cuban Families Committee were ready to pick up where they had left off. Donovan thought the missile episode had given the United States the upper hand in renewed bargaining for the prisoners. He reportedly told Castro, “If you want to get rid of them, if you’re going to sell them, you’ve got to sell them to me. There’s no world market for prisoners.” Robert Kennedy remarked that the situation now was much more relaxed with Congress out of session, and “it is probable that if more money is needed[,] it could be obtained.”² ~~✕~~

The White House did not let McCone know that the drugs-for-prisoners deal was back on track. He learned secondhand that a representative of the Cuban Families Committee had recently talked with the attorney general and that Donovan had resumed contact with American pharmaceutical executives. After meeting with one of them, McCone “expressed grave concern over the situation” to Robert Kennedy.

the DCI warned that publicity emanating from either Donovan or the drug industry would implicate the administration and the Agency in an ostensibly private humanitarian venture. Given current bad relations with Castro, the American public “and a great many others” would be “confused and disenchanted” to learn that the US government condoned back-channel dealings to ransom the

¹ “Future Policy toward Cuba,” 6 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 587. (U)

² Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs*, 319; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 535; Walter Elder untitled memorandum to McCone, 8 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1. On 20 October 1962—five days after the discovery of the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, and two days before President Kennedy’s quarantine speech—Castro sent a list of medicine and supplies that he wanted in exchange for the prisoners. McCone, reporting to the NSC ExComm on the 25th, noted that baby food comprised over one fourth of the total amount, and that the volume of blood plasma called for was three times Cuba’s annual consumption. The list from which the final deal was struck included some 10,000 items and was 225 pages long. The Department of Commerce had to screen it for embargoed goods, and substitutes for unobtainable items had to be located. ExComm meeting on 25 October 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, III*, 236; “US Officials Had Key Role in Talks,” *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. At some point in Donovan’s negotiations with Castro—whether before or after the missile crisis is unclear—some officers in the DDP devised a plan to have Donovan be the unwitting purveyor of a diving suit and breathing apparatus, respectively contaminated with Madura foot fungus and tuberculosis bacteria, as a gift for Castro, a scuba diving enthusiast. The scheme was dropped because Donovan had already presented a diving suit as a personal gift to the Cuban leader. CIA Inspector General, “Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro,” 75–76. ~~✕~~

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prisoners. McCone pleaded his case effectively; Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, and the president agreed that the United States should temporarily disengage from the negotiations.³ ~~XXXX~~

By late November 1962, however, the Cuban Families Committee had heard about the miserable conditions the prisoners were being held under and persuaded the attorney general to take up negotiations again. Kennedy declared that "We put them there, and we're going to get them out—by Christmas!" The deal's planners—the attorney general's office, the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, and CIA—developed a proposal whereby ~~XXXX~~ companies would donate the supplies Castro demanded and deduct their actual costs from the products' value and claim the difference as a business expense. With a tax rebate of 52 percent on that amount, the firms would come out ahead. Although McCone opposed the overall idea of treating with Castro for the prisoners in the wake of the missile crisis, this scheme had the virtue of assuring that no CIA money would have to be used directly. The estimated final cost of the exchange, based on the retail cost of the products in Havana, was ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~.

To counter congressional opposition as the negotiations progressed, McCone and Legislative Counsel John Warner briefed senior lawmakers. McCone was especially careful to clear up questions about the agreement's possible need for CIA funds. He told the legislators that the Agency might have to pay ~~XXXX~~ promised to Castro for releasing 60 wounded and sick prisoners in April 1962, but that he would advise Congress before drawing on CIA

money. The ~~XXXX~~ executives were not enthusiastic about the terms of the deal, either. ~~XXXX~~ complained that many of the items Castro wanted had a high cost-to-market ratio and that the companies could not meet his demands merely by dumping surplus inventory. McCone suggested that the firms contribute their profit on the agreement to charity and increase their tax break. Administration officials assured the executives that they could work together without fear of prosecution for violating antitrust laws and that they would not have to disclose proprietary cost and markup data to obtain their tax deductions. Thus mollified, the ~~XXXX~~ companies ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ agreed to the plan. Transportation firms could not receive any tax break for participating in the deal, but around 70 airlines, railroads, and trucking and shipping companies donated their services anyway.⁵ ~~XXXX~~

Other logistical and financial problems and last-minute reservations were overcome as Christmas neared. On 21 December, ~~XXXX~~ formally issued the financial instrument (a letter of credit) that underwrote the barter, and the government of Cuba and the Cuban Families Committee signed the release agreement the next day. The remaining 1,113 prisoners—much better treated in recent days—were released on the 23rd, and half were flown to Miami. Castro then said no more would be let out of the country unless he received the ~~XXXX~~ previously promised. At Robert Kennedy's request, Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston, a longtime family intimate and a sponsor of the Cuban Families Committee, raised \$1 million in a few hours. Gen. Lucius Clay, another committee sponsor, provided the rest—secured on his personal note, which sev-

³ McCone, "Memorandum of Conversation with the Attorney General Concerning the Negotiations for the Release of the Cuban Prisoners," 14 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; Lawrence Houston (General Counsel) memorandum to Chief, Task Force W, "Cuban Prisoner Exchange," 15 November 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2. ~~XXXX~~

⁴ Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 535–36; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 321–23; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 236; Elder untitled memorandum to McCone, 1 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1. Besides McCone's involvement ~~XXXX~~ a number of CIA officers spent considerable time providing intelligence, communications, security, and logistical support to the negotiations and release. When details of the exchange appeared in the press later, the Departments of Justice, Treasury, State, and Commerce were mentioned, but not CIA. Houston memoranda to McCone, both titled "Cuban Prisoner Release Negotiations," both 9 January 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; "US Officials Had Key Role in Talks," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, 1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~XXXX~~

⁵ [James Donovan,] "Chronology..." undated but c. December 1962, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); "Special Addendum, Journal, Office of Legislative Counsel," 17 December 1962, "Journal, Office of Legislative Counsel, 15–16 December 1962," and John S. Warner memorandum, "Meeting with Representative Carl Vinson, 7 January 1963," OCA Files, Job 65-00384, box 2, Carl Vinson folder; Elder untitled memorandum, 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 1; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 536; "US Officials Had Key Role in Talks," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 25 December 1962, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~XXXX~~

Castro's representatives objected to the ~~XXXX~~ expansive definition of "pharmaceuticals," which included patent medicine, mouthwash, laxatives, antacids, and menstrual supplies, but they were persuaded that the Cuban people needed those items as well. The deal also included surgical equipment and baby food. When Lansdale heard that toilet paper was one of the non-pharmaceutical items in the package, he proposed to DDCI Carter what he termed an "earthy idea" for propaganda exploitation: printing Castro's picture on the inside sheets of the rolls of paper. "The earthy appeal of this is in tune with the Cuban sense of humor, and they'd really get to laughing at Fidel." A doubting Carter passed the scheme on to McCone with this observation: "As each day passes in this pickle factory, I shudder at the depths plumbed by some of our more subtle advisors, mendicants, etc. Mongooses are notoriously diarrhetic." Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 237; Lawrence Leamer, *The Kennedy Men, 1901–1963*, 673; [Donovan,] "Chronology..." in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); Lansdale memorandum to Carter, "Barter Item for Cuban Prisoners," 20 December 1962, with attached routing slip bearing Carter's comment dated 26 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2. ~~XXXX~~

~~SECRET~~*Postlude to Crisis: Freedom Fighters and Silent Warfare (U)*

eral major US corporations in turn covered. (McCone wrongly suspected that the president's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, put up the last-minute money). All but a few of the remaining prisoners arrived in Miami on Christmas Eve.⁶ ~~X~~

President Kennedy's meeting with the leaders of *La Brigada* at his Palm Beach villa on 27 December, and his speech to all the freed prisoners and 40,000 of their friends, relatives, and supporters at the Orange Bowl two days later, lent the full moral authority of the US government to the Cuban exiles' crusade against Castro. In a dramatic and emotional scene, the president accepted the brigade's yellow-and-blue flag from its leader and pledged that its colors "will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana." The crowd roared and then chanted "*Guerra! Guerra!*" and "*Libertad! Libertad!*" President Kennedy exhorted them to keep hope alive; "although Castro and his fellow dictators may rule nations, they do not rule people...they may destroy the exercise of liberty, but they cannot eliminate the determination to be free." The president was one of the few present who knew that all dur-



Members of *La Brigada* arrive in Miami after their release. (U)

Photo: Wide World

ing the second phase of negotiations leading to the prisoners' release, the White House and CIA had been preparing to embark on a war—a secret one—to win back the Cuban people's liberty.⁷ (U)

McCone participated in one other prisoner release involving Castro.⁸ The following spring, with the DCI again playing a liaison role, Donovan negotiated the repatriation of 23 Americans jailed in Cuba. The fate of the group

had come up earlier in the negotiations for the Bay of Pigs prisoners. The Americans were traded for four pro-Castro Cubans in US jails; one of them was serving a 20-years-to-life sentence for killing a child bystander in a brawl with Cuban expatriates at a New York restaurant when Castro visited the United Nations in September 1960. McCone discussed with the president, the secretary of state, and the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, the legal and political ramifications of commuting the Cuban's sentence. Around the time Rockefeller

⁶ Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 324–29, 332–41; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 537; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 237; Triay, 136–37; Dean Rusk, "Circular Telegram to All Latin American Posts," 22 December 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 635–36; [Donovan,] "Chronology...", in *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 8, doc. 5 (part 2); "Memorandum of Agreement," 22 December 1962, *ibid.*, doc. 4; "First Cuban PWs Reach US in Exchange for Drugs, Food," *New York Herald Tribune (European Edition)*, 24 December 1962, 1, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; ~~X~~

Castro held back a few prisoners for crimes they allegedly committed in Cuba before the Bay of Pigs invasion. One of them died in prison, and others were released from time to time, but the last two were not let go until 1986. Samuel Halpern, "Revisiting the Cuban Missile Crisis," 24. After the first drug shipments arrived in the spring of 1963, the Cuban government complained that the medicines were "not entirely satisfactory." McCone, regarding the complaints as legitimate, asked Robert Kennedy to contact pharmaceutical industry representatives to make sure that the drugs still to be delivered complied with the terms of the agreement. After all the drugs had been shipped, Castro said through a private intermediary that he believed the United States had "swindled" him because the medicines were out of date. The extended incarcerations of some Brigade members may be related to Castro's displeasure. Carter untitled memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 2 April 1963, with attached transcript of McCone-Carter conversation on 1 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8; ~~X~~ "Memorandum for the Record...Porter Call to Donovan," 7 October 1963, *ibid.*, box 26, folder 5.

⁷ Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 342–45; Carbonell, 190–91; Triay, *Bay of Pigs*, 137; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, 1962, 911–13. The brigade's flag was not returned to the Bay of Pigs veterans until 1976 after negotiations between the JFK Library, where it was in storage, the General Services Administration, which legally "owned" it, and the veterans' attorney, Wyden, 303n. The US government paid the expatriates \$100 upon their return. In February 1963, it decided to halt monthly benefit payments to them and their families, which by then totaled over \$4 million. Survivors of deceased brigade members received a lump sum payment of \$3,000. "Cuban POWs' Families Got 20-Month US Aid," *Washington Post*, 1 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; ~~X~~ memorandum for ~~X~~ (DDCI executive assistant), "Payments to the Brigade," 20 February 1963, HS Files, HS/HC-528, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 28. (U)

⁸ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 360a; Carter memorandum to McCone, "Negotiations for Release of Cuban Prisoners," 4 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; memorandum about McCone meeting with Donovan, 7 January 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X/XI/XII: *Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 591; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Mr. Rusk," 30 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President," 20 February 1963, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 3; McCone memorandum to the president, "Donovan Negotiations with Castro," 10 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 755–56; Gordon Chase (NSC) memorandum, "Cuba—American Prisoners," 21 January 1963, and Chase memorandum to Bundy, "American Prisoner Deal," 21 February 1963, National Security Files: Countries, Box 56, Cuba Subjects, Prisoner Exchange, 1/63–5/63, JFK Library; Carter and Elder memoranda, "Possible Public Announcement of CIA Interest in Cuban Prisoners Designed for Political Motives," both 23 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 8; Nathan Nielsen, "Our Men in Havana," *Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 18; ~~X~~ oral history interview by ~~X~~ 29 June 1999; Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, 256–58; James B. Donovan, *Challenges: Reflections of a Lawyer-at-Large*, 92; "3 of Americans Freed by Cuba Were CIA Men," *Washington Post*, 25 April 1963: A16, and "Refugee Bargain with Cuba Ends," *New York Times*, 4 July 1963: C2, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~X~~

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released the prisoner, Robert Kennedy announced that federal charges would be dropped against three other Cubans arrested for conspiracy to sabotage US defense facilities around New York.

and missing since 21 October might have been captured. Ten days later, Havana publicly announced their arrest.⁹ ~~(S)~~

After learning more about how the failed mission had been miscoordinated between MONGOOSE project director Edward Lansdale and Task Force W chief William Harvey, McCone wrote that "DCI and CIA should always avoid any assignment under which CIA would be obliged to accept a subordinate or supporting position to Lansdale management." Despite its fondness for Lansdale, the White House realized that interdepartmental implementation of covert action, at least as attempted under MONGOOSE, was unworkable. "MONGOOSE was poorly conceived and wretchedly executed," Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has written. "It deserved greatly to fail. It was Robert Kennedy's most conspicuous folly." Lansdale later agreed that the project was counterproductive. Instead of creating a political movement against the regime, it stiffened the Cuban people's resolve to support Castro. "There is well nigh universal agreement that MONGOOSE is at a dead end," Bundy reported to the president in early January 1963.¹⁰ ~~(S)~~

A Renewed Secret Offensive Against Castro (U)

The SGA called off Operation MONGOOSE on 30 October, two days after Khrushchev agreed to halt construction on the offensive nuclear missile sites and to dismantle the weapons and return them to the Soviet Union. President Kennedy told McCone that CIA was to "do everything possible to insure no refugee or émigré provocative actions against Cuba are undertaken with or without our knowledge during the next several days" while American and Soviet negotiators fashioned the details of the withdrawal agreement. By that time, MONGOOSE had been largely converted into an intelligence collection project responsive to requirements from the JCS. MONGOOSE's covert action phase came to a dismal end in early November.

the two exiles sent to sabotage the copper mine at Matahambre

Organizational Changes (U)

The administration was not about to forswear its goal of removing Castro from power, however, and the president's Orange Bowl speech to *La Brigada* had committed him to a diplomatic, economic, and clandestine offensive against the Cuban regime. A host of overt initiatives in conjunction with the OAS, regional governments, and NATO would be combined with extensive clandestine operations led by CIA. At first, the former took precedence. "The covert aspects of our Cuban enterprise are not the most important ones at present," Bundy wrote to the president in early January. Overall US policy toward Cuba was formulated by the NSC's Plans and Operations Committee, also known as the Standing Group. That entity had existed since January 1962 but was now revitalized. Its members were Chairman U. Alexis Johnson, the deputy under secretary of state for polit-

⁹ McCone untitled memorandum to Carter (marked "URGENT"), 30 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; Carter untitled memorandum, 30 October 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; McCone untitled memorandum to the attorney general et al., 30 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 462; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Sabotage Operation," 21 November 1962, with attachments, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Havana Reports About the Arrest of Two CIA Agents," 14 November 1962, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Corn, 89-90; "CIA Plot Smashed, Castro Regime Says," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1962: A12, and "Cuba Arrests Authentic CIA Saboteur," Havana CMQ Television Network, 14 November 1962 (FBIS translation), Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~(S)~~

¹⁰ McCone handwritten note on cover sheet to Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Chronology of the Matahambre Sabotage Operation," 21 November 1962, with attachments, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Bundy memorandum to the president, "Further organization of the Government for dealing with Cuba," 4 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 648. Carter wrote on the cover sheet of Harvey's memorandum: "Lansdale, obviously running for cover, has apparently come a cropper—I for one could not accept him as Chief of Operations for anything involving Agency participation from here on out." Some scholars have erroneously stated that the Matahambre team violated its orders by going ahead with the attempt to attack the mine. The saboteurs had not been in touch with their CIA handlers since the operation had been approved three weeks earlier, so they did not know that their mission had been suspended early in the missile crisis. James A. Nathan, "The Heyday of the New Strategy: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Confirmation of Coercive Diplomacy," in Nathan, *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, 18, 36 n. 127; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 534. ~~(S)~~

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ical affairs; Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense; and Bundy and McCone. Although intended as a high-level, long-range planning entity for problem areas worldwide, the Standing Group focused on Cuba during the first months of 1963.¹¹ ~~XX~~

In addition, Kennedy jettisoned the unwieldy arrangement for developing and authorizing anti-Castro clandestine operations. The SGA was disbanded, and the regular Special Group resumed responsibility for those secret activities—even to the extent of approving individual collection missions. An Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs, housed within the Department of State and headed by a coordinator of Cuban affairs, handled the political matter of developing a post-Castro government and overseeing clandestine operations day to day. Its members were Sterling Cottrell, the coordinator; Cyrus Vance, the secretary of the army; and Richard Helms from CIA. Other officers from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Treasury, and Health, Education, and Welfare, and from CIA and USIA were detailed to the committee as needed. Lansdale returned to the Pentagon in early 1963 and was assigned to other duties in Latin America.¹² (U)

McCone directed that changes be made at CIA to better enable it to carry out its responsibilities for clandestine operations against Cuba. Based on his recent experience with MONGOOSE, and following advice from the DDP, he wanted “prompt action” on a new covert action program “to include internal CIA reorganization.” The Special Affairs Staff (SAS) under Desmond FitzGerald, an experienced covert action officer and friend of the Kennedys, superseded Task Force W. Although not directly involved in the selection, McCone no doubt approved of Helms’s choice of the debonair and professional FitzGerald as adroit bureaucratic politics. The new SAS chief described his mission as “convinc[ing] the administration that anyone from my firm deal-

ing with the Cuban situation is not necessarily a Yahoo bent on disaster...to make the Agency’s operations acceptable as respectable...[and] to get everyone hitched to a consistent policy....” Robert Kennedy, especially, approved of FitzGerald’s penchant for “action.” Unlike Harvey—“We’d been working with him for a year and no accomplishments”—FitzGerald “came up with some ideas. At least we got some projects going.”¹³ ~~XX~~



Desmond FitzGerald (U)

An Array of Operations (U)

McCone shared White House resolve not to let up on Cuba even though US-Soviet relations remained tense. During the next year, he held to the views he had expressed as the missile crisis wound down. “[T]he removal of the missiles should not end by giving Castro a sanctuary and thus sustain his subversive threat to other Latin American nations,” he told the NSC. “[A] Castro-Soviet Communist Cuba, whose stated intentions and past actions are to support and spread subversion throughout Latin America, is unacceptable to the United States.... Our policy should anticipate [further Cuban attempts to subvert neighboring countries] and should be designed to take action[,] regardless of how extreme[,] to remove this threat if [Castro] supports regional insurgents militarily.” In discussions about US policy and intelligence operations targeting Cuba during 1963, McCone argued for a comprehensive secret war against the Castro regime. He exhibited the same skepticism about erratic half-measures as he had during MONGOOSE: they would not accomplish what they were intended to, and CIA (and he) would be blamed. McCone and the Agency found themselves in a quandary: how to

¹¹ Sources on these changes in the management of the Kennedy administration’s foreign policy are: Bundy untitled memorandum to George Ball, 6 December 1962, Bundy memorandum to the president, “Further organization of the Government for dealing with Cuba,” 4 January 1963, NSAM No. 213, “Interdepartmental Organization for Cuban Affairs,” 8 January 1963, Bromley Smith (NSC), “Summary Record of the 38th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council,” 25 January 1963, and “First Report of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs,” 21 March 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 586–90, 646–51, 656–57, 687, 725; “Standing Group Meeting, January 5, 1962, Record of Actions,” and “Initial Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council... 16 April 1963,” ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5; Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 122–23; Bromley K. Smith, *Organizational History of the National Security Council during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations*, 51–53; Currey, 250–51; Richard Helms, “Memorandum for the Record... Talk with General Lansdale,” 3 December 1962, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 2; “Coordinator Named for Cuba Policy,” *Washington Post*, 9 January 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~XX~~

¹² Cottrell was a veteran Foreign Service officer who had headed a task force on Vietnam. His title as coordinator of Cuban policy was Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. (U)

¹³ Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 170; George McManus (DDP) untitled memorandum to Helms about MONGOOSE, 5 November 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X/XII: *Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 493; Harvey draft memorandum to McCone, “Operational Plan for Continuing Operations Against Cuba,” 27 November 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK34, folder 9; Elder untitled memorandum, 28 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 291–92; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 378–79. ~~XX~~

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pursue the administration's objective of destabilizing Castro's regime when political and diplomatic considerations precluded US military intervention, either to support an uprising covert actions might incite, or under the pretext of a contrived provocation. The administration would continue to pressure CIA to undertake some sort of covert "dynamic action," but Havana's heightened security meant that many operations would be interdicted and the American hand behind them revealed. Maintaining plausible deniability was even more imperative after the missile crisis than before, but also much more difficult.¹⁴ (U)

McCone's CIA undertook four varieties of clandestine activity against Castro from late 1962 through late 1963: propaganda, espionage, support for and cooperation with exile groups, and contacts with potential coup plotters and assassins.¹⁵ The outsized CIA station in Miami, JMWAVE, ran the SAS operations, providing money, materiel, training, and other assistance to expatriate organizations and individual exiles. There often was considerable overlap between the various activities. Among numerous examples: some collection assets on the island were tasked to identify disgruntled personnel in the Cuban military who might be recruited to lead a coup against Castro; propaganda messages, in radio broadcasts or leaflets dropped from balloons, were intended to incite Cubans to active and passive resistance, ranging from burning sugar cane fields and damaging machinery to leaving lights on and opening water faucets; and US-backed



The main building at JMWAVE's base in Miami (U)

Photo: *Harper's Magazine*

Given the uneasy state of US-Soviet relations, the administration wanted to ensure that anti-Castro operations were deniable, so it exercised tight control over the exile groups to prevent them from launching independent operations with serious "flap" potential. As one high-level planning document put it, "once you let them go, you can never really be sure what they will do." In addition, any weapons the Agency provided exiles had to be obtainable commercially from international arms dealers. At the same time, however, the White House decided to use former members of the Cuban Brigade in covert missions, even though their ties to CIA had been divulged. Despite the security risk, McCone supported the idea, denying that the brigade had been discredited and urging that the "brave group of Cuban patriots" be used as an asset. *La Brigada* veterans subsequently received training, much of it publicly acknowledged, from military, civilian, and covert Agency personnel.¹⁶ (S)

In the propaganda area, McCone in November 1962 instructed the DDP to undertake operations that would

¹⁴ Elder, "Memorandum of Executive Committee of NSC Meeting on...28 October 1962," *CMC Documents*, 347; McCone memorandum, "Long Term Outlook for Cuba," 13 November 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 445-46. (U)

¹⁵ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Outline of a Program to Exacerbate and Stimulate Disaffection in the Cuban Armed Forces," 19 March 1963, and Coordinator of Cuban Affairs memorandum to the Special Group, "Additional Covert Programs—Cuba," 25 March 1963, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 5; Smith, "Summary Record of the 38th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 25 January 1963, McNamara memorandum, "Armed Forces Training Program for Members of the 2506 Cuban Brigade," 8 February 1963, and Chase memorandum to Bundy, "Cuba Coordinating Committee—Covert Operations in Cuba," 3 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 686, 695-96, 749; Department of Defense press release no. 221-63, "Special Military Training Program Made Available to Members of Cuban Brigade," 16 February 1963, and FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "US Government Programs for the Utilization of the Cuban Brigade," 12 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 17, folder 5; CIA memorandum to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy..." [1978], MORI doc. no. 292538; FitzGerald memorandum to Chief/Special Operations Division, SAS No. 63-797, "AMWORLD—Defensive Weapons for Operational Ships," 3 December 1963, HS Files, Job 85-00664R, box 8, folder 1; DDP/WE Division, "Western Europe Operations Directed at Cuba, 1962-1964," 43-70. (S)

¹⁶ An example of a multipurpose operation was AMGLOSSY: a series of infiltrations and exfiltrations during May-October 1963 intended to collect order-of-battle intelligence, organize espionage and resistance networks, and select targets for sabotage. The operation was blown when a landing party ran into a Cuban ambush and several members were killed or captured. FitzGerald memorandum to Helms, "Analysis of AMGLOSSY Operation" with attachment, 14 November 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 15. (S)

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portray Cuba and the Soviet Union in a bad light just after Khrushchev's standdown during the missile crisis. One tactic suggested was planting stories in foreign newspapers that would raise doubts about Moscow's reliability. In compliance with McCone's directions, [redacted]

[redacted] In December 1962, McCone and USIA Director Murrow agreed to resume nonattributable radio broadcasts by Cuban exiles. Murrow had suggested to the DCI that the messages urge Cubans to commit low-level economic sabotage and passive resistance to disrupt the Cuban economy and make Soviet support as costly as possible. The broadcasts would caution against open rebellion and instead encourage "work slowdowns, purposeful inefficiency, purposeful waste, and relatively safe forms of sabotage...[such as] putting glass and nails on the highways, leaving water running in public buildings, putting sand in machinery, wasting electricity, taking sick leave from work, [and] damaging sugar stalks during the harvest." This approach, according to Murrow, would supplement official US economic sanctions, "provide the Cuban exile community, now straining at the bit in inactivity, an outlet for their energies...[and] give the opposition inside Cuba a purposeful line of action not tied to open revolt." McCone concurred with this approach and said that CIA would resume the broadcasts around mid-month.¹⁷ (S)

CIA's extensive espionage operations against Cuba had several purposes: to verify that the Soviet Union had not hidden any missiles in Cuba in violation of the withdrawal agreement; to collect intelligence on the Castro regime's vulnerabilities and efforts to export its revolution to neighboring countries; and to identify potential assets inside the Cuban leadership who might assist a destabilization plot. As of November 1962, the DDP had accomplished much toward carrying out the White House's and McCone's directives. It had recruited numerous agents in Cuba and Cuban

diplomats stationed in other countries, as well as [redacted] officers and crewmen on six Cuban merchant vessels; infiltrated [redacted] clandestine teams into Cuba; [redacted]

[redacted] McCone thought these intelligence-gathering efforts, and not regime-change operations, were the most important and most useful of CIA's activities.¹⁸ (S)

The administration in particular wanted to demonstrate that Castro was subverting other Latin American governments. It believed that highlighting the international communist threat would garner diplomatic support for US policy in the region.¹⁹ McCone's CIA took the lead in acquiring the necessary evidence. At the White House's request, OCI in January 1963 prepared a report on Cuban training of Latin American guerrillas and insurgents. At around the same time, McCone told Helms and DDI Cline to compile "a complete dossier of proven actions by the Communists using Cuba as a base to subvert or overthrow Latin American governments." CIA analysts concluded that the limited evidence available indicated the existence of only a relatively minor program of propaganda and training and funding of prospective insurgents. The sense of the Intelligence Community, expressed two months earlier in a special estimate, was equally as guarded. President Kennedy, apparently not convinced, asked McCone to develop "hard information" about direct Cuban ties to communists in Venezuela that could be publicized. (Venezuela's president, Romulo Betancourt, was the administration's model Latin leader.) In testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 19 February 1963, McCone made an anecdotal case that "Castro is spurring and supporting the efforts of Communists and other revolutionary elements to overthrow and seize control of the governments in Latin America."

¹⁷ Helms memorandum to McCone, "Cuban Crisis; Sensitive Covert Propaganda Operations," 15 November 1962, and McCone untitled memorandum to Murrow, 11 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 2; Murrow untitled memorandum to McCone, 10 December 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 605. (S)

¹⁸ Harvey memorandum to McCone, "Operational Plan for Continuing Operations Against Cuba," 27 November 1962, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK34, folder 9; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...", 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. (S)

¹⁹ The administration's diplomatic undertakings to persuade Latin American leaders of the security risk Castro posed are outlined in *FRUS, 1961-1963, XII, American Republics*, 334-55, 359. (U)

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Venezuela appeared to be marked as "No. 1 on the priority list for revolution," he declared.²⁰ ~~SECRET~~

To act on the White House's objectives toward Castro, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs Cottrell established a subcommittee on Cuban subversion in the Western Hemisphere. The group had members from CIA, the Departments of Defense and Justice, the Agency for International Development, and USIA. Its chairman was Maj. Gen. Victor Krulak of the Marine Corps; the Agency's representative was [redacted] from the DDP's WH Division. The subcommittee studied and recommended actions on controls of travel, money, weapons, and information among Cuba and Latin countries; intelligence exchanges and countersubversion training programs with OAS nations; and military contingency planning. President Kennedy endorsed a number of the recommendations. Those affecting CIA included increasing propaganda, intelligence collection, and liaison efforts; improving and expanding communications links in the region; and utilizing agents of influence and other covert assets to persuade governments to adopt stricter measures against Cuba. The administration's fears about Castro-inspired subversion were proven convincingly when a Cuban arms cache was found in Venezuela in November 1963 (see below).²¹ ~~SECRET~~

Insufficient Progress (U)

Much of this early effort must have seemed like MON-GOOSE *redux* to McCone—lots of "operational activity" (collecting, planning, targeting, training), scrutinized by Robert Kennedy, that did not appear to take the administration much closer to its goal of removing Castro.²² Indeed, McCone—detecting the same kind of trepidation downtown that had hobbled MONGOOSE—soon began to wonder what that goal was. He grew frustrated at what he regarded as a "serious gap" in US policy toward Cuba: the lack of "an agreed, understood course of action to bring about corrections in a situation we had declared to be unacceptable." "[W]e were dead in [the] water," he told Bundy, and he was finding it hard to persuade Congress that the administration had a plan to oust, or at least contain, the Castro regime. The Cuba Coordinating Committee and Desmond FitzGerald were busily developing and carrying out covert action plans, but at this stage—late spring 1963—McCone was skeptical about them. He did not want merely what FitzGerald termed "a probing operation" that included "subtle sabotage," but rather "a reliable blue print for [the] overthrow of the Castro regime." He thus opposed going ahead with even a stepped-up sabotage program until the administration made clear what its overall policy was to assure the removal of the remaining Soviet troops in Cuba and deal with the Castro threat.²³ ~~SECRET~~

²⁰ [redacted] National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba—Subjects, Intelligence Material, January–September 1962, JFK Library; DDP memorandum, "Cuban Aggression and Subversion Activities in Latin America," March 1962, HS Files, HS/CSG-515, Job 83-00036R, box 4, folder 1; Kirkpatrick memorandum, "Record of Communist-directed Subversion from Cuba," Action Memorandum No. 152, 10 January 1963, and [redacted]

[redacted] SNIE 85-4-62, "Castro's Subversive Capabilities in Latin America," 9 November 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 8; President Kennedy untitled memorandum to McCone, 9 February 1963, Edward B. Clafflin, ed., *JFK Wants to Know: Memos from the President's Office, 1961–1963*, 238; "Statement by the Honorable John A. McCone...to the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs...19 February 1963," HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1. McCone's testimony garnered a collection of eye-catching headlines in several newspapers on 2 March after the House committee released a sanitized version of his statement: "Cuba Trains Latin Reds, M'Cone Says" (*Chicago Tribune*), "Describes Castro's School for Sabotage" (*Chicago Daily News*), "Cuba Trains 1500 As Latin Saboteurs" (*Washington Post*), "Guerrillas Awaiting Return Home to Lead Revolts, McCone Says" (*Baltimore Sun*), and "1500 Trained by Cuba As Latin Terrorists. CIA Director Reveals" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*): articles in HS Files, Job 84-00473R, box 1, folder 6, and Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC [redacted]

²¹ Cottrell memorandum, "Establishment of Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 25 February 1963; [redacted] memorandum to Thomas Karamessines (ADDP), "Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 11 March 1963, Helms memorandum to McCone, "Work of the sub-committee on Cuban Subversion," 28 March 1963, Krulak, "Memorandum for the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Cuban Affairs...Second Progress Report, Sub-Committee on Cuban Subversion," 9 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 17; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuban Arms Cache in Venezuela," 19 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; McLean, vol. 2, 254–55. ~~SECRET~~

²² Alexander Haig, at the time the secretary of the army's detailee to the Cuba Coordinating Committee, recently recalled "the impatient prodding of Robert Kennedy and the frequent invocation of the President's name" during his assignment. "Bobby Kennedy was running it—hour by hour....[H]e had a very tight hand on the operation...Bobby was the President." Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 163, quoting interview with Haig. The record does not show whether McCone knew about the attorney general's private contacts with exile leaders—including visits by them to Hickory Hill. Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 177, 235, 238. (U)

²³ McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Mr. Bundy, 28 February [1963]," FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Outline of a Program to Exacerbate and Stimulate Disaffection in the Cuban Armed Forces," 19 March 1963, Cottrell memorandum to the Special Group, "Propaganda Inciting Cubans Within Cuba to Attack Soviet Troops," 2 April 1963, and FitzGerald memorandum to the Special Group, "Prospects for and Limitations of a Maximum Covert Action Program Against the Castro Communist Regime," 17 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 265, 634, 644, and 655; Chase untitled memoranda to Bundy, 3 and 11 April 1963, Joseph Califano memorandum to Cyrus Vance (both Department of the Army), "Presidential Action on Special Group Items Concerning Cuba," 9 April 1963, Thomas Parrott (NSC), "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 11 April 1963," and Cottrell memorandum to Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," 18 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 748–51, 754–55, 757–58, 761–62, 769–72; Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB, 23 April 1963, ER Files, Job 91S00741R, box 1, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting, 11 April 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5. ~~SECRET~~

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Throughout the intensified campaign against Castro, McCone repeatedly found himself in awkward positions at Langley because he had departed from Allen Dulles's policy of compartmenting operations from analysis. Whereas Dulles had kept the DI ignorant of the Bay of Pigs operation during its planning phase, McCone had senior Agency estimators assess the prospects for success and the international implications of covert actions in Cuba, including the ambitious sabotage plan that FitzGerald submitted in April 1963. The plan escalated the secret war, proposing that Cuban exile operatives strike higher profile targets such as freighters, refineries, and power plants. Sherman Kent, R. Jack Smith, and other senior analysts agreed with the DDP's judgment that such attacks would prompt Castro to tighten security even further and the Soviet Union to increase aid to Cuba and intensify its anti-US propaganda. Taking a longer, less tactical view than the DDP, however, the estimators concluded that more sabotage could cause a new crisis in US-Soviet relations by reviving fears of a US invasion, leading Moscow to raise the issue with the UN or take a risky action like shooting down a U-2 over Cuba. In addition, CIA assessments of the Castro regime's stability and economic health indicated that the Cuban revolution was increasingly durable and, with added Soviet Bloc assistance, could survive the US-inspired sanctions regime and sabotage. McCone agreed with an April 1963 estimate that "[t]here is a good chance that Castro's position in Cuba a year from now will be stronger than it presently is, and that in Latin America the Communists will have recovered some of the ground lost in the missile crisis."²⁴ ~~XX~~

In this way, McCone repeatedly received assessments from the Agency's senior analysts that underscored the dilemma he was in. He had to oversee a presidentially mandated clandestine program that his own estimators did not believe would work—and in which he personally had less than full confidence—unless the operations were mounted on a scale, and with a higher level of risk and "noise," than

the administration would permit. McCone believed two approaches to the Cuban problem were practicable: persuading Castro to break relations with the Soviet Union and disavow spreading revolution in Latin America; and pressuring Khrushchev to withdraw the Soviet military presence from Cuba, leaving Castro vulnerable to an American-engineered ouster. The DCI told both the president and the Special Group that the Agency's covert action plan against Castro would be pointless unless it was intensified, conducted continually, and combined with a more concerted international diplomatic and economic offensive against Cuba. He did not favor extreme forms of sabotage, such as total destruction of crops or contamination of water supplies. He questioned whether Cuban agents were competent to carry out any operations, and whether the tandem covert action/economic sanctions approach could prompt an uprising or get rid of Castro. McCone thought that regardless of what plan the administration adopted, the Cuban people would suffer more than the regime. As an alternative, he proposed that covert action be directed at the military leadership, on which Castro depended to stay in power.²⁵ ~~XX~~

As the first half of 1963 passed without more than what were derogated as "pin prick" achievements, McCone's and CIA's pessimistic forecasts became more widely shared in the administration. Policymakers concluded that there were few politically acceptable measures they could take to bring about Castro's overthrow and that intensified covert action would neither cripple the economy nor remove *el jefe maximo* from power. "The sum and substance of it is that useful organized sabotage is still very hard to get," Bundy wrote to the attorney general. "Proposals which do more good than harm are rare." The available policy options seemed to range, in Bundy's words, from "forc[ing] a non-Communist solution in Cuba by all necessary means"; to "insist[ing] on major but limited ends" (such as Castro's verifiable abandonment of regional subversion, or the opening of the island to onsite inspections); to "gradual development of

²⁴ BNE memorandum to McCone, "Comments on Proposed New Covert Policy and Program towards Cuba," 19 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 656; Smith, "Summary Record of the 2nd Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 23 April 1963, and ONE memorandum, "Developments in Cuba and Possible US Actions in the Event of Castro's Death," 13 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 780, 813-14; Kent memorandum to McCone, "Comments on Proposed New Covert Policy and Program towards Cuba," 19 April 1963, and Coordinator of Cuban Affairs memorandum to Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," 18 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 4. ~~XX~~

²⁵ McCone, "Memorandum on Cuban Policy," 25 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 670; BNE memorandum to McCone, "Cuba a Year Hence," 22 April 1963, McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Meeting with the President...", 15 April 1963, and Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 762-64, 778-79, 822-23; Parrott, minutes of Special Group meetings on 11 and 25 April 1963, *ibid.*, 757-58, 782-84; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting, 11 April 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5. McCone briefly showed interest in trying to orchestrate the "defection" of Castro from the Soviet camp as Tito of Yugoslavia had done, but the idea was not pursued further. Smith, "Summary Record of the 3rd Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 30 April 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 796-97. ~~XX~~

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some form of accommodation with Castro." Even in the case of Castro's death, the Standing Group regarded US options as "singularly unpromising," including the one on which the administration would soon place most of its hopes—support for exiles.²⁶ (U)

Heightened Concerns, Inadequate Means (U)

Castro's four-week trip to the Soviet Union during April–May 1963 imparted renewed urgency to the administration's secret war against Cuba. During his visit, the Cuban leader spoke to huge crowds across the country, received the Order of Lenin, repaired relations with the Kremlin, and won promises of increased foreign aid. According to BNE, "Soviet and Cuban fortunes have been bound more closely together" as Khrushchev had "strengthened the commitment of Soviet prestige to the Cuban revolution" and "gained an important trump card for defending Soviet policy against the attacks of Communist China."²⁷ (U)



Khrushchev greets Castro in Moscow in 1963. (U)

In line with that reasoning, McCone in late May urged the Special Group to approve a program of sabotage to "create a situation in Cuba in which it would be possible to subvert military leaders to the point of their acting to overthrow Castro." The DCI interpreted Castro's most recent statements as indicating that he was more firmly tied to Moscow than ever. Any reconciliation with Washington—in which Cuban leaders purportedly had shown an interest, according to [redacted]

[redacted] interviews with an American journalist—would be on Soviet and Cuban terms only. Although, as ONE said in early June 1963, the Castro-Khrushchev accord did not presage "imminent, horrendous developments" in Latin America, it did indicate that the

Kremlin endorsed a gradual intensification of Cuban subversive activities in the region. There was thus little chance of moving Castro toward becoming a "Caribbean Tito"—communist yet independent of Moscow. Moreover, economic sanctions were ineffective because US allies would not act in concert with it. An impatient Robert Kennedy endorsed a broader, more aggressive covert action plan, insisting that "the US must do something against Castro, even though we do not believe our actions would bring him down."²⁸ (U)

On 8 June, with McCone's endorsement, CIA submitted an "Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba," and President Kennedy approved it 11 days later in order to, in the words of the plan, "nourish a spirit of resistance and disaffection which could lead to significant defections and other byproducts of unrest." The program, which presumed that American military intervention had been ruled out, was designed to "encourage dissident elements in the military and other power centers of the regime to bring about the eventual liquidation of the Castro/Communist entourage and the elimination of the Soviet presence from Cuba." The new effort required an unprecedented coordination of collection, propaganda, economic sanctions, sabotage, and support for autonomous exiles. "Unless all the components of this program are executed in tandem," the Agency proposal stated, "the individual courses of action are almost certain to be of marginal value.... This is clearly a cause where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The last two activities, sabotage and support for exiles, had the greatest potential for showing the American hand behind a supposedly Cuban-instigated liberation

²⁶ Bundy memorandum to Robert Kennedy, 16 May 1963, quoted in Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 541; Cottrell memorandum to the Special Group, "Proposed New Covert Policy and Program Towards Cuba," with attachment, "A Covert Harassment/Sabotage Program against Cuba," 18 April 1963, Bundy memorandum to the Standing Group, "The Cuban Problem," 21 April 1963, and Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 772, 777, 821. The Standing Group had reached its gloomy conclusion after reading and discussing ONE's memorandum "Developments in Cuba and Possible US Actions in the Event of Castro's Death," 13 May 1963, *ibid.*, 813–14. ONE judged that a power struggle between pro-Moscow communists and Cuban nationalists probably would break out, but even with that instability, anti-Soviet elements would require extensive American help—including probably military intervention—to prevail. ONE also concluded that exile groups would have little say in events after Castro's death and that Cubans still on the island would not cooperate with a government-in-exile. (U)

²⁷ BNE memorandum to McCone, "Implications of Castro's Visit," 29 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 671. (U)

²⁸ Helms memoranda to McCone, "Interview of US Newswoman with Fidel Castro Indicating Possible Interest in Rapprochement with the United States," 1 May 1963, and "Reported Desire of the Cuban Government for Rapprochement with the United States," 5 June 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk, 14 May [1963]," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 678, 684, and 685; Krulak memorandum to Maxwell Taylor, "Conversation with Mr. John A. McCone," 6 June 1963, record no. 202-10002-10034, NARA/JFK Assassination Records; ONE memorandum to Assistant to DDI for Policy Support, "Khrushchev, Castro, and Latin America," 4 June 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 5; Smith, "Summary Record of 7th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council," 28 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 822–23. McCone earlier had thought Castro would leave Moscow disappointed and that CIA should develop "a strong psych campaign" to "exacerbate tensions or disagreements" between him and Khrushchev. Karamessines memorandum to Chief, DDP/Soviet Russia Division, 9 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 8.

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movement. Sabotage attacks—ranging from petty harassment to hit-and-run raids against ships, power plants, factories, and petroleum and transport facilities—would be conducted by Agency-trained and -controlled Cuban assets on and off the island, and by selected exile groups. To maintain deniability, all so-called “autonomous operations” would be launched from outside US territory; American participation in them would be limited to a CIA liaison officer who dispensed advice, funds, and materiel.²⁹ (U)

McCone emphasized to the president that the operations “would create quite a high noise level” that “must be absorbed and not create a change in policy.” He also cautioned against impatience; “no single event would be conclusive.” At around the same time, however, he approved another estimate that seemed to call the whole enterprise into question: “[W]ithout leadership and without goals...no opposition force is likely to develop the power to challenge Castro, however much equipment or support it might get from the outside.”³⁰ ~~(S)~~

The chief operative element of the new plan, the Cuban exiles, had presented two continuing difficulties for McCone and US policymakers ever since MONGOOSE: maintaining unity among fractious anti-Castro groups, and preventing them from mounting attacks without US approval. By early 1962, over 200 exile organizations had formed, principally in the United States. According to an Agency analysis in mid-1962, “the exile community, divided and quarrelsome, forms into groups and organizations, breaks up, disappears, and reforms in a kaleidoscopic picture

which varies from week to week.” This unstable factionalism made it hard for CIA to rely on the exiles to advance the administration’s covert action agenda against Castro. Until April 1963, Washington simultaneously supported the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) as a umbrella political organization comprising 10 generally centrist groups, and several militant factions for specific activities. CIA also recruited individual exiles for espionage and sabotage missions and for contacting resistance cells on the island.³¹ ~~(S)~~

During the months after the missile crisis, unauthorized raids by independent exile groups—such as Alpha 66, its offshoot Lambda 66 (also known as Commandos L), and the Second Front of the Escambrey—threatened to upset the Kennedy-Khrushchev settlement and prompted the administration to toughen its approach toward them. The US government did not control the groups but was aware of their activities, news of which circulated freely in the porous Cuban refugee communities of Florida and Puerto Rico that funded them. (This poor security meant that Castro also knew about the exiles’ plans—sometimes before the administration did.)³² The exiles’ hit-and-run attacks had multiple purposes—building their stature within the anti-Castro community, impressing CIA with their competence, demonstrating their independence from the United States, and provoking confrontation between Washington and Moscow. Instead, they created diplomatic difficulties for the administration because Cuba, the Soviet Union, and many other countries presumed the United States used all exiles as proxies. The freelancers’ operational dramatics—lone fishing boats, with machine guns mounted to the

²⁹ CIA, “Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba,” 8 June 1963, FitzGerald, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House concerning Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba,” 19 June 1963, and FitzGerald, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State re Discussion of Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba,” 22 June 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, *XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 828–34, 842–44. (U)

³⁰ FitzGerald, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House concerning Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba,” with addendum by McCone, 19 June 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, *XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 837–38, NIE 85–63, “Situation and Prospects in Cuba,” 14 June 1963, *ibid.*, 834–36 and *FRUS*, 1961–1963, *XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 687; [Kirkpatrick,] “Memorandum for the Record...DCI’s Presentation to the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...26 June 1963,” DDO Files, Job 78-03805R, box 3, folder 12a. ~~(S)~~

³¹ Principal sources on the exile groups are: J.C. King (Chief, DDP/WH Division) memorandum to Allen Dulles, “Transmittal of Information on Anti-Castro Groups and Organizations,” 2 August 1961, and King memorandum to Helms, “Agency Relationship with Anti-Castro Elements,” 25 September 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 4; McCone memorandum to Taylor, “Principal Organizations and Personalities Within the Cuban Exile Movement,” 23 May 1962, National Security Files, Country Series, Cuba—Subjects, Exiles, January–October 1962, JFK Library; Seymour R. Bolten (SAS) memorandum to FitzGerald, “Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC),” 21 February 1963, MORI doc. no. 349135; House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations, *Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Hearings*, 12 vols. (hereafter *HSCA Hearings*), vol. 10, parts IV, VI–XI, XIV; CIA memorandum, “CIA Involvement with Cubans and Cuban Groups Now or Potentially Involved in the Garrison Investigation,” 8 May 1967, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK1, folder 7; Bundy, “Memorandum for the National Security Council Standing Group, Annex 7, Exile Problems,” 21 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, *XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 661. A good sense of the on-the-ground rigors and vagaries of the covert war against Castro is provided by a US Army officer seconded to CIA as a training adviser to the exiles: Bradley Earl Ayers, *The War That Never Was*. ~~(S)~~

³² Lyman Kirkpatrick later wrote that “the loose talk was most unfortunate for those freelance exiles who were running their own operations.... Many of these died needless deaths as their plans quickly reached the ears of Castro’s agents in the United States, who then sent advance warning to the island.” *The Real CIA*, 188–89. The US government’s “covert” dealings with the exiles received regular press coverage, especially in Miami but also in Washington; see, e.g., Dan Kurzman, “US Builds Up Underground’s Support in Cuba,” *Washington Post*, 13 August 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. McCone noted during his directorship that the exiles boasted about their dealings with US officials, and he suggested that contacts with them be conducted through cutouts. FitzGerald memorandum, “Notes on the Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council[,] 16 July 1963,” ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 24, folder 5. ~~(S)~~

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prows, dashing across the Florida Straits to "liberate" Cuba by strafing civilian targets along the coast—inadvertently served the Agency's interest by enabling it to pass off raids by its own teams as the work of uncontrollable exiles.³³ (C)

CIA officials feared, however, that if the groups became too aggressive or attacked a third country's property or citizens, Havana would have justification for imposing a crack-down, and Moscow might delay its military withdrawal from the island or start escorting its merchant ships with naval vessels. Just after the Khrushchev standdown, President Kennedy had ordered CIA to do what it could to interdict the more daring groups, such as Alpha 66. Nonetheless, the expatriates' unauthorized raids continued and put the administration in a political bind. It either appeared ineffective by its inability to rein in the exiles, or it bore at least indirect responsibility for their actions by appearing to condone them.³⁴ (U)

After two raids in March 1963—probably by Alpha 66 and Lambda 66—that damaged Soviet commercial ships and installations, the administration decided to clamp down on the exiles and disengage from efforts to unify the anti-Castro groups.³⁵ The Department of State issued a statement that it "strongly opposed...hit-and-run attacks by splinter refugee groups," and at a press conference on 21 March, the president said the US government did not support the group responsible for the assaults. At month's end, McCone briefed the Standing Group on the exile organizations and offered the assessment that although the raids added strain to US-Soviet relations, they contributed to the immediate goal of subverting Castro. Moreover, if the Cuban leader could not deal effectively with the attacks and his domestic position weakened, Moscow might reevaluate its support for him. Lastly, expressing a personal opinion,

McCone believed that trying to force the exiles to stop their operations would bring more domestic criticism on the administration than would officially disassociating itself from the attacks while allowing them to continue. The other Standing Group members went back and forth over whether the United States could restrict the attacks and decided to develop contingency plans for doing so.³⁶ (C)

The unresolved problem of unauthorized raids jeopardized the US-Soviet accord that ended the missile crisis. The Kremlin charged that by "offering...its territories and material needs to CIA bandits hiding behind the skirts of Cuban malcontents who had deserted their country to embrace capitalism," the US government was causing a "dangerous aggravation" of the situation. Maintaining the façade of plausible denial, President Kennedy stated at a press conference on 3 April that the United States had no official connections with the exiles and that their attacks made freeing Cuba harder. "We don't think a rather hastily organized raid which maybe shoots up a merchant ship or kills some crewmen...represents a serious blow to Castro, and, in fact, may assist him in maintaining his control." Subsequently, the Coast Guard, the FBI, the Customs Service, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service worked harder to stop the autonomous groups. After the administration spurned a demand from the leader of the CRC, José Miro Cardona, that the US government support an exile military alliance, he resigned. The administration promptly ended its subsidy to the CRC, which it suspected of underwriting some of the "pin-prick" raids.³⁶ (C)

With some restraints on the freelancers now in place, the administration concentrated its support on two exile groups: the Movement to Recover the Revolution (MRR) and the Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE). CIA regarded

³³ CIA memoranda, Antonio Veciana and Alpha 66, 26 July 1962, and "Alpha 66/Organization and Plans," 7 September 1962, MORI doc. nos. 427443 and 284371; Hinckle and Turner, 154–57; Carbonell, 240–42; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 230–31; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 540; Andrew St. George, "Hit and Run to Cuba with Alpha 66," *Life Magazine*, 16 November 1962, 55ff., Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC (C)

³⁴ President Kennedy felt little but contempt for the militant Cuban expatriates. He sardonically noted that, in contrast to "real" guerrillas inside Cuba, "these in-and-out raids were probably exciting and rather pleasant for those who engage in them. They were in danger for less than an hour." Smith, "Summary Report of 42nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council," 29 March 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 741. McCone was scarcely more impressed with the freelancers, figuring they "would undoubtedly talk if captured." Parrott, "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 11 April 1963," *ibid.*, 758. The expatriate umbrella organization in Puerto Rico, UNIDAD, was more successful at restraining exile activities that would embarrass the US government. CIA Information Report, "Organization and Identity of Leaders of Anti-Castro Groups in Puerto Rico," 15 April 1963, MORI doc. no. 27024. (U)

³⁵ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: docs. and notes in *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 728, 732–34, 739–46, 752, 775, 786–88, 823–27, 842–44; *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: *Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 635–39, 642, 645, 652, 654, 661, 664, and 683; memoranda and documents in McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; DCI morning meeting minutes, 20 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 344; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, 13, 58; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, 1963, 278; Theodore Shackley testimony to Church Committee, 16 May 1976, Church Committee, *Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy*, 11; Corn, 97ff.; Hinckle and Turner, 156ff.; Carbonell, 242–49; William B. Breuer, *Vendetta! Fidel Castro and the Kennedy Brothers*, 211; "US Strengthens Checks on Raiders," *New York Times*, 6 April 1963, and "Cuban Refugees Restive Under US Restrictions," *ibid.*, 7 April 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC (C)

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MRR as the most potentially capable exile organization and gave it more aid than any other anti-Castro group [redacted]

[redacted] Formed in 1959 by defectors from Castro's revolutionary cadre, MRR's leader was Manuel Artime Buesa, a Bay of Pigs veteran and frequent contact of the attorney general. Headquartered in Miami, the 300-man MRR by October 1963 had set up four bases in Central America for staging sabotage and harassment raids against Cuba—although Agency officers later would say the group wasted most of the CIA money it received. JURE was MRR's main competitor for the Agency's attention and resources. It was established in April 1962 by Manolo Ray Rivero, another disenchanted former lieutenant of Castro's. JMWAVE officers initially worried about Ray's leftist politics, but by mid-1963 the Agency fully supported JURE's activities. Robert Kennedy's meeting with Ray in September gave the group a special cachet among the exiles.³⁷ ~~(S)~~

With the particulars of CIA's integrated covert action program (AMWORLD) agreed to, McCone moved to fend off micromanagement and obstruction of the operations by agencies represented on the Special Group—especially the Department of State. Dean Rusk, in particular, was “not enthusiastically behind the CIA program,” as the DCI put it, because he believed some *modus vivendi* could be reached with Castro. In June 1963, McCone advised the Special Group that “the program should be considered as an integrated and continuing thing which could not be put on a stop and go basis”; it needed “to flow forward...without requiring each operation to be justified in political and economic terms without regard to the total plan.” Sensing Rusk's reservations that the hit-and-run raids—which averaged two a month—would create too much “noise,”

McCone tried to persuade him that no rapprochement with Castro was achievable on politically acceptable terms. Rusk, who agreed with the strategic thrust of the covert offensive, apparently decided to let it go without further resistance. McCone and Rusk had an almost identical exchange of views several months later, although by then—as described below—the DCI could cite an operational track record to buttress his conclusions.³⁸ (U)

Security and deniability became major issues for the Special Group practically from the start of the AMWORLD program after media reports in July linked the United States to exiles who were planning raids against Cuba from Central America. One account even described Robert Kennedy's conversations with anti-Castro commandos. McCone agreed with the attorney general's suggestion to have the US government “float other rumors so that in the welter of press reports no one would know the true facts.” Freelance raids—such as three aerial attacks during August and September—continued to trouble the Special Group members as well, although US controls on the splinter groups generally were effective.³⁹ ~~(S)~~

With policy matters settled, McCone largely drew back from the integrated program as his operations subordinates carried it out. During all of 1963 (no breakdown before and after the approval of the program is available), 88 infiltration and exfiltration operations, for espionage and sabotage purposes primarily, were planned, and 73 were carried out. Secret intelligence collection through singleton agents and agent networks increased, although these operations had a high casualty rate—25 assets were captured or killed during 1963. (Some of the compromises were related to a double agent program that the Cuban intelligence service had begun recently.) By late 1963, a former Cuban politician the

³⁶ Substantial disillusionment with Miro, the first prime minister of Castro's revolutionary regime, existed within the administration well before then. He had pressed the administration for a guarantee of military support for many months. See Bundy memorandum about conversation with CRC members, 29 March 1962, and Robert A. Hurwitch (Cuban affairs officer, Department of State) memorandum to Edwin M. Martin (Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs), “The Cuban Exile Community, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, and Dr. Miro Cardona,” 19 April 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, X, *Cuba 1961–1962*, 777–78, 797–98. (U)

³⁷ [FitzGerald,] “Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations...,” c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Orville Bathe (WH Division) memorandum, “Manuel Artime,” 25 July 1973, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK38, folder 2; Project AMWORLD files, HS Files, HS/CSG-2676 and 2677, Job 85-00664R, box 8, folders 1 and 2; CIA biographic profile of Artime, 26 February 1963, and CIA Information Report CSDB-3/660,494, “Political Philosophy of Manuel Artime Buesa,” 9 April 1964, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 1 and box 3, folder 5; Felix Rodriguez and John Weisman, *Shadow Warrior*, chap. 8; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, 65–69, 77–79, 137–40; Hinckle and Turner, 148–50; Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 171–75; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 238; “Cuban Exiles: Splinter Groups Imperil Unity,” *Washington Evening Star*, 17 April 1963, A8, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~(S)~~

³⁸ FitzGerald, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State re Discussion of Proposed Covert Policy and Integrated Program of Action towards Cuba,” 22 June 1963, McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Secretary Rusk—21 June 1963—re Cuba,” and McCone, “Meeting on Policy Relating to Cuba...,” 12 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 842–45, 883–85. (U)

³⁹ Smith, “Summary Record of the 10th Meeting of the Standing Group of the National Security Council,” 16 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 852–53; Chase memorandum to Bundy, “Exile Raids From Outside Areas—Pros, Cons, and Public Position,” 12 September 1963, *ibid.*, 864–65; [FitzGerald,] “Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations...,” c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9. ~~(S)~~

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Agency had recruited the year before had established a productive intelligence network of 150 subagents and informants. CIA also claimed some success in targeting military dissidents. By year's end, the DDP had identified nearly four dozen prospects in the leadership ranks and had contacted three "heroes of the revolution." Four of the 73 abovementioned missions involved sabotage by commando teams that inflicted damage and received publicity. Most significantly, in August a petroleum-oil-lubricants depot was attacked, and in September a sawmill that produced many of Cuba's railroad ties was destroyed.⁴⁰ (U)

The US-backed groups were less successful at staging operations, however, than were teams of unaffiliated commandos. MRR completed only one of four missions, and JURE did not launch any. All these Agency and exile operations, along with between 30,000 and 40,000 propaganda leaflets and an average of 32 hours daily of broadcasts from seven radio stations, may have inspired over 100 indigenous acts of sabotage—derailing trains, short-circuiting electric systems, burning vehicles, and even bizarre tactics such as tying gas-soaked rags to the tails of cats, igniting them, and setting the terrified felines loose in sugar cane fields. The covert offensive, Robert Kennedy said, "was better organized than it had been before and it was having quite an effect.... There were ten or twenty tons of sugar cane that were being burned every week through internal uprisings."⁴¹ (U)

In October and November 1963, McCone and the other Special Group members approved more than 20 added sab-

otage operations for the next three months. The administration's generally favorable consensus was that "CIA's sabotage operation is in the main low cost and...does worry the Castro regime, denies him some essential commodities, stimulates some sabotage inside Cuba and tends to improve the morale of the Cubans who would like to see Castro removed." In Special Group meetings, McCone advocated economic sabotage more forcefully than before, but he continued to caution against expecting any regime change, whether through a coup or an uprising, to occur anytime soon. (CIA analysts credited Castro's antiguerrilla program with squelching most internal resistance.) Robert Kennedy described the administration's bottom line as of November 1963, however: "[T]he program had produced a worthwhile impact on Cuba during the past five months and...it was useful in the United States as an indication that something was being done" about Castro.

Other Castro-Related Business (U)

While the Agency's secret efforts to destabilize Castro's regime were underway, McCone participated in Special Group discussions about the administration's diplomatic feelers to the Cuban leader in October and November 1963.⁴³ The previous June, the Special Group had agreed that it would be a "useful endeavor" to explore "various possibilities of establishing channels of communication to Castro." This so-called "sweet approach" eventually was made

⁴⁰ CIA memorandum to the HSCA, "CIA Operations Against Cuba Prior to the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy..." passim. Besides AMWORLD, CIA had another, more narrowly focused, regime change operation underway—AMTRUNK, intended to "overthrow the existing Cuban government by means of a conspiracy among high-level military and civilian leaders...culminating in a coup d'etat which will oust both Castro and the Communists from power," according to a program review. Through AMTRUNK, CIA recruited some of Castro's cadre and established infiltration and exfiltration capabilities, but the program suffered from serious security vulnerabilities—some related to the double agent program—and was terminated in 1965. Chief/JMWAVE memorandum to Chief/SAS, "Project AMTRUNK Operational Review," 5 April 1963, CIA JFK Assassination Records, Job 80T01357A, box JFK36, folder 16; Scott D. Breckinridge (Deputy IG) memorandum to Acting DDIC, "Comments on Book V, SSC Final Report, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy...*," 30 August 1977, *ibid.*, folder 11, tab C. (U)

⁴¹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on Policy Relating to Cuba..." 12 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 884; Andrew, 304; Robert F. Kennedy oral history interview by John Martin, 1 March 1964, quoted in Russo, *Live By the Sword*, 237. (U)

⁴² Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 173; Paul Eckel (NSC), "Memorandum for the Record...Cuban Operations," 12 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 885-88; Bruce B. Cheever (SAS), "Minutes of the Meeting to Review the Cuban Program," 14 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 718; [redacted] memorandum to Elder, "Briefing Notes on the Status of the Cuban Program," 6 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 31, folder 7; Helms memorandum to Robert Kennedy, "After Action Report on Recently Conducted Sabotage Operations," 4 September 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16; OCI Special Report, "Guerrilla and Antigerrilla Operations in Cuba," 22 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 375; [FitzGerald,] "Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations..." c. July 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Corn, 106. ~~X~~

⁴³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Donald E. Schulz, "Kennedy and the Cuban Connection," *Foreign Policy* 27, Spring 1977: 62-64, 121-22; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 551-55; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 240-44; docs. 332, 367, 372-74, 377-79, 382, 384, and 387 in *FRUS, 1961-1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 798-99, 868-70, 877-83, 888-93, 897-900, 902-4; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Reported Desire of the Cuban Government for Rapprochement with the United States," 5 June 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 685; Helms memorandum to Bundy, "Castro's Alleged Desire for Rapprochement with the United States," 27 April 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 3, folder 15; [redacted] (Coordinator of Cuban Affairs) untitled memorandum to Bundy, McCone, et al., with attachment, 24 June 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 5; William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks: A Personal Adventure*, 142-44; *idem*, *The Twilight Struggle: Tales of the Cold War*, 257-63; Peter Kornbluh, "JFK and Castro: The Secret Quest for Accommodation," *Cigar Aficionado*, September-October 1999; and *Kennedy and Castro: the Secret History*, broadcast on the Discovery Channel, 25 November 2003. ~~X~~

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through an American television reporter (Lisa Howard of ABC News), a well-known French journalist (Jean Daniel), and a member of the staff of the US Mission to the United Nations (William Attwood). ~~XX~~

Earlier in the year Castro purportedly had indicated through various intermediaries—the American journalist, the wife of a former Dutch diplomat, and an Israeli businessman—an interest in a rapprochement with the United States. Castro's first feeler came in May 1963 in a long interview with Lisa Howard. ~~XX~~

~~XX~~ [redacted] McCone immediately worried that news of the interview ~~XX~~ [redacted] would leak, creating pressure on the administration to respond to Castro. Marshall Carter wrote to Bundy that

Mr. McCone cabled me this morning stating that he cannot overemphasize the importance of secrecy in this matter and requested that I take all appropriate steps along this line to reflect his personal views on its sensitivity. Mr. McCone feels that gossip and inevitable leaks with consequent publicity would be most damaging. He suggests that no active steps be taken on the rapprochement matter at this time and urges most limited Washington discussions, any discussions on the fact that the rapprochement track is being explored as a remote possibility and one of several alternatives involving various levels of dynamic and positive action. In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the Lisa Howard report be handled in the most limited and sensitive manner.⁴⁴

McCone never thought the Cuban leader was sincerely interested in settling his differences with the United States but was engaged only in a cynical exercise to buy time and divert the administration's attention from Havana's subver-

sive activities in the hemisphere. The back-channel talks about talks continued inconclusively through the rest of Kennedy's term and ended a short while into the Johnson administration. ~~XX~~

McCone was privy to the last major event in the Kennedy administration's campaign against Castro: CIA's discovery in November of a three-ton cache of Cuban-origin weapons and explosives in Venezuela, along with plans for mounting a coup against the government of Romulo Betancourt. (One of Washington's staunchest allies in the region, Betancourt had called for Castro's overthrow and discussed his assassination with US officials.) McCone heard about this incontrovertible evidence of Cuba's strategy to destabilize Latin America earlier in the month and authorized Helms to inform Robert Kennedy. On the 19th, the DDP and an Agency expert on South America met with the attorney general, who immediately sent them to the White House with a rifle from the cache. The Kennedys, Helms wrote at the time, "were intensely interested in this concrete example of Castro's export of arms for subversion." The president, preparing to leave to give a speech in Miami on Western Hemisphere affairs, congratulated his visitors. "Be sure to have complete information for me when I get back," he told them. "I think maybe we've got him now." On the 23rd, however, the day after Kennedy was assassinated, CIA's station in Miami received a cable from Headquarters directing it to "postpone [anti-Cuban] ops indefinitely. Rescheduling will depend upon consultation with appropriate officials"—the new president, Lyndon Johnson, and his advisers. After a brief interruption during the mourning period, the Agency resumed its anti-Castro activities. McCone and his operations deputies had no expectation that the new administration would significantly change the clandestine offensive against Cuba—an incorrect presumption, as will be seen.⁴⁵ ~~XX~~

⁴⁴ Carter letter to Bundy, 2 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 798–99. (U)

⁴⁵ Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Cuban Arms Cache in Venezuela," 19 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; [redacted] vol. 2, 254–55; Stephen Rabe, "After the Missiles of October: John F. Kennedy and Cuba, November 1962 to November 1963," *PSQ* 30, no. 4 (December 2000): 723; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 666–67, citing interview with Helms. According to Helms, the cache contained Belgian-made submachineguns that had small round marks braised on their stocks. Suspecting that the marks were obliterated emblems, CIA technicians used a process to briefly restore the images—the national seal of Cuba. Helms, "Remarks at Donovan Award Dinner," 24 May 1983, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11. Critics of CIA—such as former officers Joseph B. Smith and Philip Agee—have claimed that the Agency planted the arms, and a CIA operational proposal submitted to the NSC in May 1963 suggested a "deception operation involving the laying down of Soviet, Czech, and Chicom arms in selected areas of Latin America, ostensibly proving the arms were smuggled from Cuba." However, McCone assured President Johnson in late November that the cache was genuine. CIA paper on possible covert actions against Cuba, May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIX/XII: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 675; McCone memorandum of 30 November 1963 meeting with President Johnson (dated 2 December), *FRUS 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 896. ~~XX~~

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Waging Camelot's Counterinsurgencies (I): Laos (U)

President John F. Kennedy sympathized with the aspirations of nationalists in the Third World and was determined not to let the Soviet Union and Communist China exploit them.¹ "The desire to be free of all foreign tutelage—the desire for self-determination—is the most powerful force in the modern world," he had told an interviewer in 1960. "America must be on the side of the right of man to govern himself," for in doing so it gained a formidable ideological ally. "[N]ationalism is the force which disposes of sufficient power and determination to threaten the integrity of the communist empire itself." (U)

Kennedy's vision, however, clashed with that of the Soviet Union's adventurous and unpredictable leader, Nikita Khrushchev. In early January 1961, Khrushchev declared his intention to assert the superiority of Marxism-Leninism in the most vulnerable areas of the globe—the former colonies of Western Europe—by supporting "wars of national liberation." President Kennedy believed the United States was sorely unprepared to face this challenge, which he told Congress was "the most active and constant threat to Free World security." The Eisenhower administration's buildup of the US nuclear arsenal may have produced a stalemate in the strategic arena, but it eroded US ability to fight conventional wars and left it unready to deal with the small-scale conflicts that seemed an inevitable legacy of decolonization. Kennedy and his brother Robert were lastingly affected by memories of their visit to Southeast Asia in 1951, were familiar with the writings on guerrilla warfare of Mao Zedong and Ché Guevara, and had been influenced by Edward Lansdale's criticism of the US military's strategy in

Vietnam. They and the energetic circle of "action intellectuals" in the New Frontier, steeped in the insights and optimism of the new social sciences, chose to meet communism on its own ground with an array of overt and covert policies intended to demonstrate the determination of the United States, uphold its credibility, and banish the image of the "Ugly American." Although the US armed services had the predominant role in carrying out this policy, CIA and John McCone were major players in formulating and implementing its covert action aspects. (U)

A New Paradigm (U)

In military and intelligence terms, the Kennedy administration became enamored of the concept of "flexible response" and its adjunct in developing countries, counterinsurgency doctrine (often designated in military documents as COIN).² An interagency planning study in 1962 described counterinsurgency as the "combined use of political, economic, psychological, military, and paramilitary efforts to maintain security and government control and support where they still largely exist...and to restore them in areas where they have broken down...." Western victories over communist insurgencies in Greece, Malaysia, Burma, and the Philippines showed that this new unconventional approach could bring success in "people's wars." Counterinsurgency would be the military element in the Kennedy administration's geopolitical vision for the Third World, complementing modernization and nation building in the social, economic, and political realms. (U)

¹ Sources for this introductory section are: Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance*, chap. 3; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 27–33, 287–92; Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power*, 329; Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 27–33; Miroff, 38–39; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 460ff.; idem, *A Thousand Days*, 310–11, 340–42; D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms*, 17–24, 104–15; and Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 631–33. (U)

² John Kennedy expressed his views on this subject while in the Senate in 1959: "...in practice our nuclear retaliatory power is not enough. It cannot deter Communist aggression which is too limited to justify atomic war. It cannot protect uncommitted nations against a Communist takeover using local or guerrilla forces. It cannot be used in so-called brush-fire wars.... In short, it cannot prevent the Communists from nibbling away at the fringe of the free world's territory or strength." John F. Kennedy, *The Strategy of Peace*, 184. (U)

In 1960, retired Gen. Maxwell Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff during 1955–59, caught Kennedy's attention when he wrote a critique of the Eisenhower administration's military strategy—aptly entitled *The Uncertain Trumpet*—that advocated less reliance on the nuclear deterrent and emphasized the importance of conventional forces and counterinsurgency tactics. "The strategic doctrine which I propose to replace Massive Retaliation is called...the strategy of Flexible Response. The name suggests the need for a capability to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge, for coping with anything from general atomic war to infiltrations and aggressions such as threaten Laos and Berlin...." Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 6. Then-senator Kennedy wrote in a review that Taylor's book "leaves no room for doubt that we have not brought our conventional war capabilities into line with the necessities. We have allowed important aspects of our national military strength to erode over the past years." The senator wrote to Taylor that the book's "central arguments are most persuasive...and it has certainly helped to shape my own thinking." John M. Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, 8. On Kennedy's interest in flexible response before his election, and on how his administration developed the policy, see Bose, 42, 48–61. The shortcomings in how the Kennedy and Johnson administrations tried to practice flexible response in Southeast Asia are incisively analyzed in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap. 7. (U)

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CHAPTER 7

Southeast Asia, and especially Vietnam, would be the main testing ground for this new paradigm of warfare by social science. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said the United States had "to prove in the Vietnamese test case that the free world can cope with Communist 'wars of liberation' as we have coped successfully with Communist aggression at other levels." After visiting South Vietnam in October 1961, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, as the president's military adviser, recommended that the United States embark on an aggressive counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam, with a heavy admixture of covert action and espionage. Castro's revolution in Cuba showed how powerful an unchecked guerrilla movement could become, and the president's rough initiation into geopolitics during 1961—the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin Wall, and the Vienna summit—made it imperative that the administration act resolutely in Southeast Asia. Politically at home and abroad, Kennedy could not afford to "lose" the region to, as he said in April 1961, "a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence..."³ (U)

The president quickly gave life to the doctrine of COIN by establishing special policies, mechanisms, and personnel.⁴ At the first NSC meeting of his administration, Kennedy ordered the secretary of defense, "in consultation with other interested agencies...[to] examine means for placing more emphasis on the development of counter-guerrilla forces." He approved a sizable counterinsurgency plan for Vietnam, developed in late 1960 during the transition, which proposed extensive military and social reforms. Acting on his fascination with unconventional warfare, the president per-

sonally endorsed the Army's Special Forces, and the Air Force and Navy set up their own commando units. Inside the Pentagon, a new office—the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities—was created to report to the secretary of defense on "special warfare" matters, including joint operations with CIA; and budgets for military "civic action" programs and research and development on anti-guerrilla weapons swelled. In mid-1962, an interagency committee on police assistance programs—comprising representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice, the Agency for International Development (AID), the Bureau of the Budget, and CIA—recommended large increases in funding for "preventive medicine" against "urban and rural dissidence."~~XX~~

By July 1962, over 500,000 military personnel and students at war colleges and service academies had attended courses in counterinsurgency. Thousands of civilian federal employees—including ~~XXXXXX~~ CIA officers—also took such classes, often as a prerequisite to assignment in countries where insurgencies were occurring or anticipated. Senior diplomats and national security managers heard Robert Kennedy, Walt Rostow, Lansdale, and others expound upon counterinsurgency in the ongoing "National Interdepartmental Seminar on Problems of Development and Internal Defense" taught through the Foreign Service Institute.⁵ In August 1962, the administration proclaimed its COIN doctrine, with implementing programs, in a long paper entitled "US Overseas Internal Defense Policy"—a document its principal author (Charles Maechling of the Department of State) in 1999 would call "to this day...the

³ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 336. (U)

⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 57, 70–79, 83–85; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 631–33; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 340–42, 541; idem, *Robert Kennedy*, 465; John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 220–28; Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, 128–31; Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 166–70; Jefferson P. Marquis, "The Other Warriors: American Social Science and Nation Building in Vietnam," *DH* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 79–105; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 415; Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 331–32; Robert D. Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *DH* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 49–52; J. Justin Gustainis, "John F. Kennedy and the Green Berets," *Communication Studies* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 41–53; "Record of Actions Taken at the 475th Meeting of the National Security Council," 1 February 1961, NSAM No. 56, "Evaluation of Paramilitary Requirements," 28 June 1961, President Kennedy untitled memorandum to McNamara, 11 January 1962, Bundy memorandum to Taylor, "Police Programs," 14 February 1962, NSAM No. 132, "Support of Local Police Forces for Internal Security and Counter-Insurgency Purposes," 19 February 1962, Parrott untitled memorandum to the president, 22 March 1962, NSAM no. 146, 20 April 1962, "Report of Committee on Policy Assistance Programs," 20 July 1962, NSAM No. 182, "Counterinsurgency Doctrine," 24 August 1962, "Editorial Note," U. Alexis Johnson memorandum to the president, "Progress in the Counter-Insurgency Program," 14 March 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 22, 111, 235–36, 248–50, 256, 345–48, 381–83, 464–66; JCS memorandum to McNamara, "Joint Counterinsurgency Concept and Doctrinal Guidance," JCSM-252–62, 5 April 1962, CMS Files, Job 80B01083A, box 1, folder 12; NSAM No. 131, "Training Objectives for Counter-Insurgency," 13 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Lemnitzer memorandum to Bundy, "Summary Report, Military Counterinsurgency Accomplishments Since January, 1961," 21 July 1962, quoted in Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 70–71; NSAM No. 163, "Training Objectives for Counterinsurgency," 14 June 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 2; Krepinevich, 103–12; Shafer, 112–15; CIA Office of Training Bulletin, May 1962, 24–25, HS Files, HS/HC-377, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; "United States Overseas Internal Defense Policy," September 1962, 25, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII/VIII/IX: Arms Control; National Security Policy; Foreign Economic Policy; Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 279. ~~XX~~

⁵ The Johnson administration reaffirmed this training mandate in NSAM No. 283, "US Overseas Internal Defense Training Policy and Objectives," 13 February 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 422–25. McCone did not participate in the Interdepartmental Seminar but was well "indoctrinated" in counterinsurgency through White House discussions and CIA papers and briefings. (U)

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most interventionist statement of American [foreign] policy ever promulgated."⁶

McCone, CIA, and COIN in Southeast Asia (U)

Maechling's document described John McCone and CIA as "active participant[s] in the US Internal Defense effort at both the national and the country team levels."⁷ The Agency was no stranger to counterinsurgency in theory or practice when McCone took charge. In CIA's early days, paramilitary elements in the Office of Policy Coordination and the DDP conducted, and collaborated with liaison services in, "unconventional warfare"—guerrilla-style methods that later would be termed "counterinsurgency." CIA officers participated in examinations of the concept during the Eisenhower administration, and in 1955, the Agency commissioned its own study (Project Brushfire) of the factors that led to "peripheral wars." Richard Bissell, the DDP, was assigned in March 1961 to lead an interagency group to study how best to organize the US government to fulfill the counterinsurgency mission.

In Washington, the NSC's subcommittee, the Special Group Counterinsurgency, became the venue in which McCone joined in senior-level operational and policy reviews of CIA's counterinsurgency projects. The SGC was the embodiment within the policymaking bureaucracy of the Kennedy administration's fascination with counterinsurgency. The president established it in January 1962 to oversee large-scale paramilitary operations in Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The SGC's officially stated purpose was "[t]o assure unity of effort and the use of all available resources with maximum effectiveness in preventing and resisting subversive insurgency and related forms of indirect aggression in friendly countries." Highest on the list of SGC functions was "[t]o insure proper recognition throughout the US government that subversive insurgency ('wars of liberation') is a major form of politico-military conflict equal in importance to conventional warfare." The SGC also was responsible for overseeing counterinsurgency training throughout the federal government. Its first chairman was Gen. Taylor, who described the group as "a sort of Joint Chiefs of Staff...for all agencies involved in counterinsurgency." Other members were the attorney general, Robert Kennedy; the president's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy; the chairman of

⁶ Charles Maechling Jr., "Camelot, Robert Kennedy, and Counter-Insurgency—A Memoir," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 75, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 445. "Internal defense" was a contemporary synonym for counterinsurgency. (U)

⁷ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 219–20; "Elements of US Strategy to Deal with Wars of National Liberation," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VIII/VIII/IX: *Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 249; Bissell, 149;

"Editorial Note," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VIII, *National Security Policy*, 229; DDP/FE Division memorandum, "History of CIA in Vietnam," 26 June 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 13; William Colby with James McCargar, *Lost Victory*, 83–84. CIA's early excursions into counterinsurgency in Southeast Asia are detailed in Thomas L. Ahern Jr., *CIA and the House of Ngo: Covert Action in South Vietnam, 1954–63*, chaps. 2–8; idem, *The CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, chaps. 1–2; Currey, chaps. 7–8; memorandum, "Concept of Guerrilla Warfare," 14 June 1955, HS Files, HS/CSG-1850, Job 83-00036R, box 11, folder 18; memorandum for DDCI Charles P. Cabell, "Report on Department of State-JCS Counter Guerrilla Study Group," 1 September 1960, and Richard Helms (DDP Chief of Operations) memorandum to DCI Allen Dulles, "The Current Status of Counter Guerrilla Warfare Doctrine and Training," 27 January 1961, HS Files, HS/CSG-1746 and 1747, Job 83-00036R, box 11, folder 18.

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CHAPTER 7

the JCS, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer; the deputy secretary of defense, Roswell Gilpatric; the deputy under secretary of state for political affairs, U. Alexis Johnson; the director of AID, Fowler Hamilton (later, William Gaud); after mid-1962, the director of USIA, Edward R. Murrow (later, Donald Wilson and Carl Rowan); and the DCI.⁸ ~~✗~~

McCone and his SGC colleagues usually met in Room 303 of the Executive Office Building every week for two hours in the mid-afternoon.⁹ Meetings could not be rescheduled and subordinates could not attend without appropriate authority to assure that decisions were made in a timely manner and by officials with the power to commit their agencies to the decisions. (Meetings were suspended during the height of the Cuban missile crisis.) McCone came most of the time; when he did not, he sent Marshall Carter or Richard Helms. The meetings normally opened with an intelligence briefing from the DCI or his representative. SGC members then discussed the panoply of programs dealing with counterinsurgency—among them training of American officials, police assistance, civic action, and paramilitary operations—and their implementation in a lengthening list of target countries.¹⁰ The group spent as much time on Latin America as on Southeast Asia during the first months, but the latter eventually took precedence, particularly after the SGC began reviewing interdepartmental programs recommended by the lower-level Southeast Asia Task Force.¹¹ Early on, SGC members agreed to forego specialized committees and to enlist any needed staff support from participating agencies. McCone at first did not believe CIA



The Special Group Counterinsurgency in October 1962. Attending this meeting were (from the left) Donald Wilson, Lyman Lemnitzer, U. Alexis Johnson, Robert Kennedy, Maxwell Taylor, Roswell Gilpatric, McCone, and Sterling Cottrell. (U)

Photo: JFK Library

officers were giving him the same level of assistance for SGC business as his counterparts received at the Departments of State and Defense and the White House, and he admonished subordinates to take “corrective action” so he could be adequately prepared.~~✗~~

In spite of all the attention the SGC had given to counterinsurgency issues by early 1963, President Kennedy was still dissatisfied with his administration’s overall progress in that area. In part, he blamed the SGC for interpreting its

⁸ “Editorial Note,” NSAM No. 124, 18 January 1962, and Parrott untitled memorandum to the president, 22 March 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 229–30, 236–38, 253–57; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 67–69; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI)...13 September 1962,” McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 197. ~~✗~~

Senior CIA managers opposed the formation of a separate NSC committee on counterinsurgency, believing that the current Special Group structure could handle the issue. Bissell memorandum to McCone, “General Taylor’s Proposal on Use of Special Group to Guide U.S. Strategy on Counter-Insurgency,” 3 January 1962, John Bross memorandum to McCone, “Establishment of the Special Group (Counter Insurgency),” 5 January 1962, and Bross memorandum to Parrott, “Establishment of the Special Group (Counter Insurgency),” 9 January 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 12; Lemnitzer memorandum to McNamara, “National Cold War Procedures,” 30 November 1961, CIA Counter-Guerrilla Warfare Task Force, “Elements of US Strategy to Deal with ‘Wars of National Liberation,’” 8 December 1961, and Bissell memorandum to McCone, “Relationship Between Counter-Guerrilla Warfare Task Force Report and the JCS Paper ‘National Cold War Procedures,’” 20 December 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 5, folder 2. ~~✗~~

In August 1962, McCone successfully argued against Robert Kennedy serving as chairman of the SGC, contending that his work as attorney general and the image of the administration would suffer if his involvement with international activities outside the Department of Justice—especially covert operations—became known publicly. McCone’s position made Taylor and Bundy “very upset”; the latter told Kennedy that the DCI “was completely wrong” in his view, but the attorney general sided with McCone. McCone, “Memorandum of Discussions Concerning the Appointment of Chairman of Special Group (C-I), August 16, 1962,” McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; “Meeting on Intelligence Matters,” 20 August 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, 488. After Taylor was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs in November 1962, the under secretary of state for political affairs began heading the SGC—while McCone was DCI, first U. Alexis Johnson, then W. Averell Harriman. NSAM No. 204, 7 November 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 3. ~~✗~~

⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Johnson, *Right Hand of Power*, 330; Maechling, 447; minutes of SGC meetings for 1962–63 in McCone Papers, box 1, folders 3 and 4; documents of SGC activities in *FRUS, 1961–1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 253–57, 352–55, 454–55, 464–67; McCone notes on SGC meeting on 21 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; “Minutes of the Special Group (CI) Meeting...12 July 1962,” *ibid.*, folder 4. ~~✗~~

¹⁰ By mid-1962, eight more countries—Burma, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Iran, and Venezuela—were considered sufficiently threatened by communist-inspired insurgency to warrant the specific interest of the SGC. Burma was dropped a few months later. (U)

¹¹ In keeping with the Kennedy administration’s tendency to proliferate working groups, in June 1962 the Southeast Asia Task Force supplanted the Vietnam Task Force, which became the Vietnam Working Group. CIA’s representative on the Task Force during 1962–63 was the chief of the DDP’s FE Division—first Desmond Fitzgerald, then William Colby. “Editorial Note,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 466. (U)

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responsibilities too narrowly and for having a doctrinaire approach. The group's membership disagreed and succeeded in resisting White House attempts to expand its brief. ~~SECRET~~

CIA took part in the Kennedy administration's counterinsurgency campaign in ways other than those approved in the SGC during McCone's first year in office. At Headquarters, new components were created and existing ones expanded to better develop, manage, and support counterinsurgency initiatives. Especially important was the Counterinsurgency Group of the DDP's CA Staff, which was established in July 1962. Agency officers with pertinent experience were designated to join other departmental representatives in developing training doctrine and courses and in advising foreign paramilitary, security, and police services on creating or improving counterinsurgency programs in their own countries. CIA's involvement in paramilitary activities depended on their nature. According to an NSC directive in late June 1961, operations that were to be "wholly covert or disavowable" could be assigned to CIA, while the military had responsibility for large operations that required more resources than the Agency could provide. CIA personnel also participated on research and development committees to ensure that US technical capabilities could cope with the special demands of larger-scale counterinsurgency operations. Lastly, DI offices expanded coverage of counterinsurgency-related matters in their regular publications and produced more special products on low-intensity conflict and political and social instability in the Third World. ¹² ~~SECRET~~

In general, McCone—who had no experience with or knowledge of counterinsurgency before his appointment—looked at the subject from a relatively narrow, departmental perspective, and on the SGC he represented the Agency more as a program administrator than as a policy formulator. He wanted to make sure CIA carried out the counterinsurgency duties the White House gave it without its participation in them becoming divulged and without the Agency becoming entangled in activities not historically associated with an intelligence service. Although he perceived the Soviet and Chinese hand behind various "people's

wars," he did not have the president's broader geopolitical view of counterinsurgency as a novel aspect of superpower conflict. Likewise, he lacked Robert Kennedy's at times romantic engagement with the ethos of revolution. Given McCone's untheoretical intellect and overall skepticism about covert action, the sentiments behind the attorney general's later high-toned observation that "[i]nsurgency aims not at the conquest of territory but at the allegiance of man...[c]ounterinsurgency might best be described as social reform under pressure" would have left him wondering what an intelligence agency could realistically hope to accomplish under such a vague rationale. His dilemma was figuring out how to be responsive, protective, and not obstructionist, all at the same time. ¹³ (U)

McCone's bureaucratic perspective showed from the start. For example, he did not want the SGC to let the Department of State and AID use CIA funds for programs ostensibly labeled counterinsurgency that actually were economic development activities. His concern for protecting CIA monies grew when the president stated in August 1962 that counterinsurgency programs would not be limited to military measures but also would incorporate other approaches such as economic development, police assistance and training, and civic action. McGeorge Bundy defined civic action as "using military forces on projects useful to the populace at all levels in such fields as training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communication, health, sanitation, and others helpful to economic development." From the DCI's vantage point, many of these programs might be useful in combating insurgents, but most were not activities in which he thought an intelligence service should engage. "Unless such projects can be absolutely and positively defended as essential to CIA's mission[.]" he wrote, "we should resist such use." At another time, McCone worked against the Department of State receiving full administrative control of interdepartmental field visits to countries under SGC purview. He did not think US diplomats should determine whether a particular agency had an interest in a country sufficient to warrant sending its own representative on a trip there, and he did not want CIA activities disclosed to travelers from other departments. He retained his authority

¹² NSAM No. 57, 28 June 1961, and NSAM No. 162, 19 June 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 112-13, 305-7; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities since 1 January 1961," [July 1962,] HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 27; Helms memorandum to Director of Training, "Training Objectives for Counter-Insurgency," 28 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Cline memorandum, "DD/I Activities in Connection with Overseas Internal Defense," 14 July 1962, and BNE, "Counterinsurgency Critical List," OCI Memorandum No. 2693/62, 25 July 1962, CMS Files, Job 80B01083A, box 1, folder 10. ~~SECRET~~

¹³ Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 463; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 87; NSAM No. 182, 24 August 1962, and "Editorial Note" on policy paper titled "U.S. Overseas Internal Defense Policy," *FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 381-83. (U)

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over this part of Agency business and sent emissaries to South Vietnam whenever he thought it necessary.¹⁴ ~~XXXX~~

The administration's counterinsurgency campaign was intrepid and energetic but also superficial and prone to gimmickry. "There was," Kennedy administration chronicler Arthur Schlesinger Jr. noted, "a faddish aspect to this enthusiasm. Some of its advocates acted as if...blackening one's face and catching sentries by the throat in the night could by themselves eliminate the guerrilla threat." Under Secretary of State George Ball concluded later that "the amount of effort and theology with which that whole business was invested was totally incommensurate with anything we ever got out of it."¹⁵ (U)

As happened with many ideas that seized the New Frontiersmen in their early days, interest in counterinsurgency diminished over time. Senior policymakers could spend only a small fraction of their workdays on it. The approach had its sterling success in Venezuela, where a progressive democratic government, with firm US (including CIA) support, repelled Cuban-backed subversion. In Southeast Asia, however, feckless or repressive local leaders could not or would not carry out the reforms needed to win their people's allegiance. Moreover, as the US military presence steadily increased in the region, counterinsurgency was overshadowed by more conventional approaches and lost the characteristics that made it, as President Kennedy told a West Point graduating class in 1962, "a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force..." The signal evidence that the original intent of COIN would not be realized was the appointment of Gen. Paul Harkins—a protégé of Gen. George S. Patton, and a thoroughly orthodox commander—to head the new Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) in 1962. For McCone's CIA, this trend

meant that the Agency's paramilitary covert action programs and other clandestine activities in Laos and South Vietnam would be inexorably transformed into operations in support of a broader conventional land and air war.¹⁶ (U)

"The End of Nowhere": The "Secret" War in Laos (U)

Although in foreign policy terms the 1960s comprised the Vietnam decade, the Kennedy administration's attention to Southeast Asia initially was directed at Laos.¹⁷ The adversaries in the Cold War viewed that landlocked country, strategically located between China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma, as a bellwether for the region. To Laos's neighbors, as a March 1961 NIE stated, the Laotian crisis was "a symbolic test of intentions, wills, and strengths between the major powers of the West and the Communist bloc." Internal disunity and lack of a strong central authority made the exotic "Land of a Million Elephants and the White Parasol" vulnerable to the machinations of outsiders. Laos was the dominant foreign policy issue in the final months of the Eisenhower administration, and when Dwight Eisenhower met with John Kennedy the day before the latter's inauguration, they talked more about it than anything else. The outgoing president warned his successor that "[i]f Laos is lost to the Free World, in the long run we will lose all of Southeast Asia."¹⁸ ~~XXXX~~

President Kennedy took the message to heart. Three days after taking office, he set up a task force on Laos consisting of national security policymakers at the deputies level. At a news conference on 23 March 1961, standing before three maps of Laos that depicted an expanding area of red, the president declared: "[A]ll we want in Laos is peace, not war; a truly neutral government, not a cold war pawn; a

¹⁴ NSAM No. 119, "Civic Action," 18 December 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 231; "Minutes of Special Group (CI) Meeting, 1 February 1962," and McCone untitled memorandum, 22 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; NSAM No. 173, "Interdepartmental Field Visits," 18 July 1962, "Minutes for Meeting of Special Group (CI)...9 August 1962," and McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting of Special Group (C-I) on August 9, 1962," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4. AID's role in counterinsurgency in South Vietnam is discussed by several former members of the agency's US Operations Mission in Harvey Neese and John O'Donnell, eds., *Prelude to Tragedy: Vietnam, 1960-1965*. For the connection between counterinsurgency and civic action in another region, Latin America, dear to the Kennedy administration, see Willard F. Barber and C. Neale Ronning, *Internal Security and Military Power*, chap. 6; and Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, chap. 6. ~~XXXX~~

¹⁵ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 342; idem, *Robert Kennedy*, 466. (U)

¹⁶ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 454. (U)

¹⁷ The quoted words in the subhead come from an unidentified American official in Laos, who reportedly said in November 1960 that the country "is the end of nowhere. We can do anything we want here because Washington doesn't seem to know it exists." Charles A. Stevenson, *The End of Nowhere*, vii. A pro pos most Americans' ignorance of Laos, George Ball sardonically observed that when a general named Phoumi seized power from a politician named Phoui in 1957, "[it] could have been either a significant event or a typographical error." Ball, 362. (U)

¹⁸ NIE 50-61, "Outlook in Mainland Southeast Asia," 28 March 1961, 14; "Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Kennedy," 24 January 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 42. See also *ibid.*, docs. 7-10; Clifford, 342-44; and Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy about Indochina? The Politics of Misperception," *JAH* 79, no. 2 (September 1992): 568-97, for other accounts of the Eisenhower-Kennedy meeting on 19 January 1961. ~~XXXX~~

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settlement concluded at the conference table and not on the battlefield." But if "armed attacks by externally supported Communists...do not stop, those who support a truly neutral Laos will have to consider their response." "Laos is far away from America," he reminded listeners, many of whom probably could not have found that obscure country on a globe, "but the world is small." "The security of all South-east Asia will be endangered if Laos loses its neutral independence. Its own safety runs with the safety of us all."¹⁹ (U)

At that time, Laos was in the throes of political instability, [redacted]

[redacted] who received aid from North Vietnam. According to Robert Kennedy, the president would have sent troops into Laos if the Bay of Pigs disaster had not precluded another controversial intervention for a while.²⁰ Thus, a covert action failure in the Caribbean energized another secret enterprise on the other side of the world—ultimately the longest, largest, and, until the Afghan program of the 1980s, the costliest paramilitary venture in CIA history. (U)

The Confused Context (U)

When McCone arrived at Langley in November 1961 he inherited a complicated and unsettled situation in Laos.²¹ Laos had been designated a neutral country under the 1954 Geneva agreements ending French colonial rule in Indochina. The International Control Commission established to enforce the Geneva accords and preserve Laos's neutrality proved ineffectual, as three political camps—communist, neutralist, and rightist—vied for control. The communist Pathet Lao had the support of South Vietnamese communists, who had entered Laos in 1953, and North Vietnam, which aimed to use Laos as a pathway into South Vietnam. The Pathet Lao controlled Laos's two northeastern provinces and staged their efforts to control Laos from there. The Lao-

tian communists' political leader throughout this period was Prince Souphanouvong. (U)

Fearful that a neutral Laos would eventually fall to the communists, the Eisenhower administration tried unsuccessfully to establish a pro-Western government in Vientiane, and when, in 1957, neutralist leader Prince Souvanna Phouma joined a coalition with the Pathet Lao, [redacted]

¹⁹The full text of Kennedy's news conference is in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1961*, 212–20. Roswell Gilpatric, the deputy secretary of defense, headed the Laos task force. (U)

²⁰"Thank God the Bay of Pigs happened when it did," the president told Theodore Sorensen in September 1961. "Otherwise we would be in Laos by now—that would be a hundred times worse." Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 702; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 644. (U)

²¹In addition to the specific materials cited herein, publications used for background information are listed in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

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[redacted] and numerous policymakers in the Eisenhower administration resisted it.²³ The Department of State, including AID and the US ambassador to Laos, were satisfied with the neutralist regime of Souvanna Phouma [redacted]

[redacted] US views on Kong Le varied. CIA predicted (correctly) that under pressure he would ally himself with the Pathet Lao but otherwise regarded him as independent-minded; Pentagon officials who had worked with Gen. Phoumi, as well as some senior Department of State representatives, thought Kong Le was too leftist. (U)

[redacted] A rightist government gained power in 1958 after a parliamentary crisis [redacted] and it purged leftists from the bureaucracy and ordered the Pathet Lao to join the army. By mid-1959, however, the communists, led by Souvanna Phouma's half-brother Souphanouvong, had started a new military offensive [redacted]

[redacted] Phoumi led a coup in December 1959, but a corrupt election in 1960, intended to install him as a democratic leader, instead triggered a coup by Kong Le, a neutral military officer. Kong Le then designated the neutralist Souvanna Phouma as head of government. (U)

Alarmed by this apparent leftward shift in Vientiane, Washington—[redacted]

[redacted] encouraged Phoumi to regroup and force Kong Le and Souvanna Phouma out in December 1960. Kong Le then formed an alliance with the Pathet Lao. Aided by a Soviet airlift of military supplies, they drove Phoumi's troops out of a key area north of the capital, the Plain of Jars, and threatened to seize the capital. [redacted]

[redacted] The Hmong, some of whom had helped the French in the early 1950s, became the most important of several US-backed tribal groups. According to Kennedy aide Walt Rostow, the Hmong performance was "the one bright spot in our operation." A few weeks after taking office, President Kennedy—determined to resist a communist takeover of Laos, but sharing his predecessor's reluctance to intervene militarily—authorized [redacted] the Pentagon to expand the Hmong program by recruiting, training, and equipping a 3,000–4,000-man tribal counterforce that would be Washington's chief weapon against the communists. The force grew steadily and numbered around 9,000 by late 1961 [redacted]

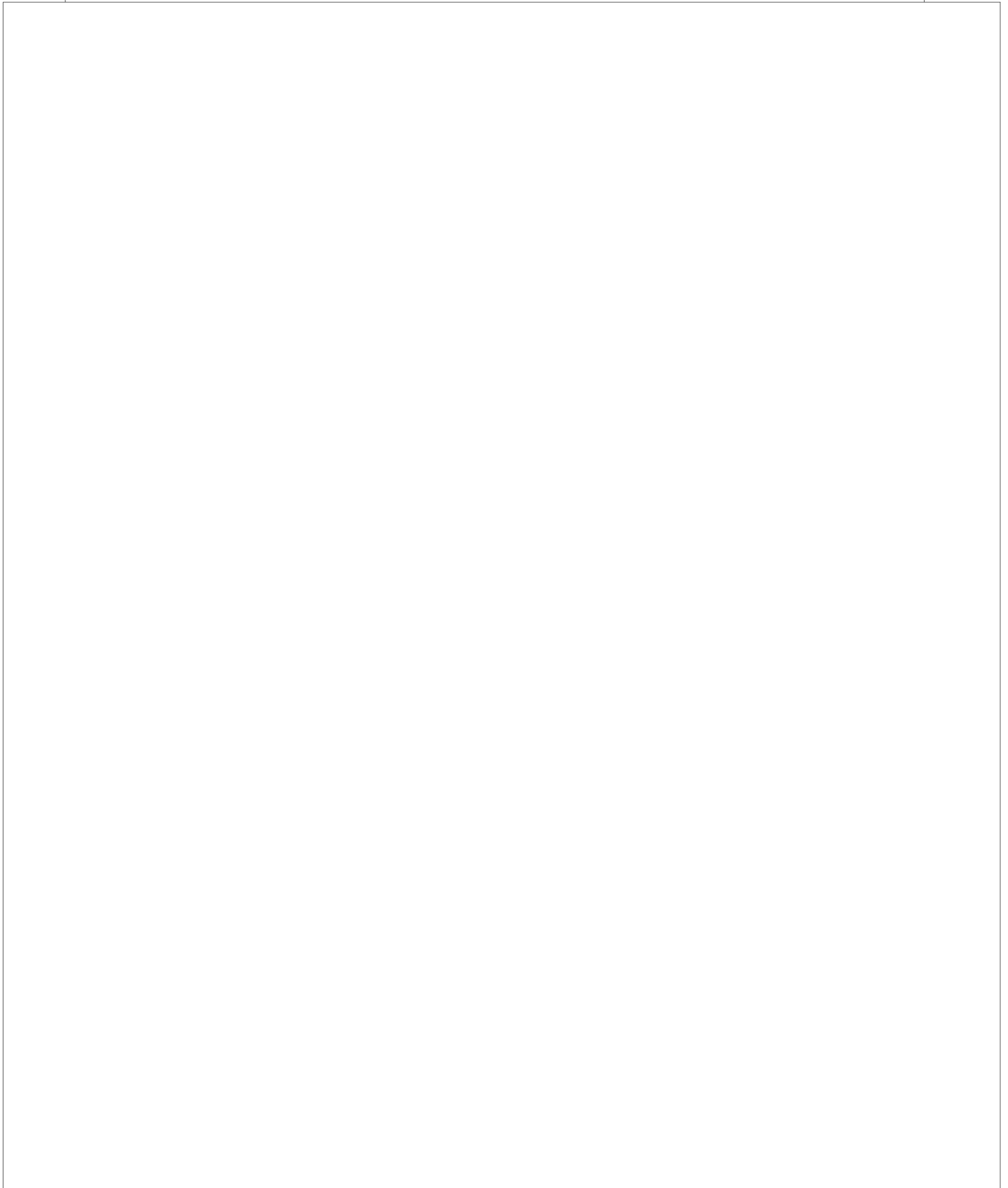
[redacted] It was effectively harassing the Pathet Lao and forcing them to divert resources from their campaign against the government. ~~XX~~

²³ Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars*, 263; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 116; Stevenson, 85, 93–94, 102–3; Robert H. Johnson (NSC) memorandum to Walt W. Rostow (White House), "Strengthening a Souvanna Phouma Government in Laos," 28 November 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXIV, *Laos Crisis*, 528; SNIE 68-60, "The Situation and Short-Term Outlook in Laos," 6 December 1960, 4. Also in December 1960, in response to reports that North Vietnam and possibly the People's Republic of China were about to invade Laos, the Eisenhower administration ordered U-2 flights over potential entry routes into the country. The photography did not substantiate the Laotian government's claims, which were soon retracted. Agency-run U-2 missions over Laos continued until 1964, when the Air Force assumed responsibility for them. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 221, 231, 233. (U)

²⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: FE Division memorandum, "Counterinsurgency Operations in Laos," undated but c. 1963, EA Division Files, Job 78-01421R, box 4, folder 1; Rostow memorandum to President Kennedy, "Laos Task Force Meeting..." 28 February 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXIV, *Laos Crisis*, 62; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program (1955–1974)," December 1975, 19, ER Files, Job 96S01068R, box 1, folder 64; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 140; Lansdale memorandum to Taylor, "Resources for Unconventional Warfare, S.E. Asia," c. July 1961, in *The Pentagon Papers* 2, 646–47; [redacted] SNIE 58-3-61, "The Situation and Short-Run Outlook in Laos," 28 September 1961, 2–3; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities since 1 January 1961," 19 July 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84R00389R, box 1, folder 27, 12–15; FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Briefing on Laos," c. late May 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1; [redacted] 221; Lansdale memorandum to McNamara and Gilpatric, "Meos," 28 June 1961 [redacted] HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 2. [redacted] Green Berets. [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

President Kennedy, beset with challenges in Berlin, Cuba, and the Congo, rejected the counsel of bellicose advisers on Laos and decided to follow a parallel political track that he hoped would lead to a neutral coalition government in Vientiane.²⁵ Through diplomatic channels, the president detected no Kremlin interest in escalating tension over Laos; he knew he would not get the backing of Congress or the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) for large-scale military action; and he did not believe Gen. Phoumi could win on the battlefield because the Pathet Lao had the upper hand militarily by May. So the president opted for a diplomatic solution while Souvanna Phouma ran the country with increased military aid. (U)

In May 1961, the opposing sides in Laos agreed to a ceasefire and negotiations in Geneva.²⁶ While the diplomats talked, the Pathet Lao and the Hmong fought, though less intensely than before; leaders of political factions in Vientiane kept jousting for influence; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] US money continued to flow to the Laotian army; some American land and naval forces deployed in the region; and administration officials, anticipating the worst but hoping for better, debated whether to press for a unified, neutral Laos or to accept a partition of the country into communist and non-communist areas. [REDACTED]

Intelligence Policy and CIA Operations (U)

Into this situation, McCone brought with him no expertise on Southeast Asia other than his knowledge of shipping in the Pacific region. His strong anticommunism, however, gave him definite ideas about how to "settle" the complexities of Laos. He believed the United States should lend full support to the rightists and royalists and be willing to

extend its defense of Laos into neighboring countries, if necessary. "[N]eutralism," McCone wrote to his journalist friend Arthur Krock earlier in the year, "seems to spell ultimate communist domination by one means or another." A few weeks after taking over as DCI, he read a special estimate whose judgment could only have bolstered his position. The Laotian army's combat effectiveness had improved recently, according to the SNIE, but unless it received outside reinforcements, the estimate concluded, the communists could overrun key government positions and, working with North Vietnamese regulars, quickly take over the entire country. When Secretary of State Rusk in early January 1962 promoted a plan for a coalition government—with Souvanna Phouma as prime minister and defense minister and one of his supporters as interior minister—the DCI dissented vigorously. That arrangement would be unstable, and relying so much on Souvanna Phouma would turn Laos into "an open roadstead from North Vietnam to South Vietnam." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The SGC approved a proposal in which Phoumi would receive a prominent domestic portfolio in a neutralist government [REDACTED] but the US Country Team in Vientiane doubted that those inducements would suffice. [REDACTED]

The Pathet Lao's rout of 4,500 Laotian regulars from the northern provincial capital of Nam Tha in early May 1962 created a new crisis in Laos. It now seemed likely that Souvanna Phouma would not have time to prevent a communist takeover. According to a community assessment after the battle, [e]vents of the past year have almost certainly convinced the communist side that the risk of US intervention has lessened significantly and that they can increase the level of military operations in seeking to achieve their immediate objectives—a negotiated "neutralist" coalition government in Laos which they could soon dominate, or the

²⁵ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Bundy untitled memorandum, 28 July 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 325; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 247; Roger Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 49. Robert Amory, the DDI when Kennedy took office, has said that he told the president that the communists could match any US buildup, and that logistical and communication problems would make supporting a large American deployment very difficult. On the other hand, according to Amory, Richard Bissell and Desmond Fitzgerald of the DDP backed putting US troops into Laos. Peter S. Usowski, "Intelligence Estimates and US Policy Toward Laos, 1960-63," *ICNS* 6, no. 2 (April 1991): 377-78. (U)

²⁶ Averell Harriman, the assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, led the US delegation at Geneva after the first round of talks. CIA provided him with a personal intelligence liaison to keep him informed of developments in Laos. Usowski, "Intelligence Estimates and US Policy Toward Laos," 379. (U)

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disintegration of the Royal Laotian Government and Army.²⁸ (U)

McCone thought this unfavorable trend could be reversed only if the administration indicated its intention to move US troops into Laos. He cautioned President Kennedy not to engage in idle saber rattling. If the United States raised the prospect of committing forces to Laos, it must be willing to follow through and even take the fight into North Vietnam and deny the communists a sanctuary there by bombing airfields, supply depots, and transportation and communications facilities. Echoing recent estimates, he told the president that the communists would match any increase in US effort in Laos, whether in the form of military assistance or the deployment of combat units. He disagreed with the Pentagon's view that logistics constrained the communists' escalation and said they would keep up the pressure regardless of how long they took to accomplish their objectives. In short, McCone advised, if the United States was going to draw the line against communist expansion in Southeast Asia at the Laotian border, it must be willing to endure the costs of a lengthy and sizable conventional conflict. For the time being, however, President Kennedy settled for what he considered a firm yet unprovocative response: sending the Seventh Fleet to the Gulf of Siam, increasing the US troop presence in Thailand by several thousand, and moving some forces already there to the bor-

der with Laos. He also decided to resume aid to Vientiane and to recognize the government of Souvanna Phouma. As on many other occasions, the White House sent McCone to brief Eisenhower, hoping to forestall Republican criticism of administration policy.²⁹ (U)

McCone's views put him at odds with White House pursuit of a neutral Laos.

speculation arose in official circles that the Agency was working against the administration and supporting rightists. For example, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman believed the Agency had contravened instructions and persuaded Phoumi to reinforce Nam Tha, thereby provoking the communists' assault.

In addition, according to press reports, CIA officers advised Phoumi against joining a coalition government and circumvented a suspension in aid to Phoumi's forces. By this time, Harriman believed that Phoumi was "definitely provocative and unresponsive" and that the administration should "encourage ferment" in Laos and "do everything we could to downgrade Phoumi".

McCone's reaction to that suggestion is not recorded, but he commented privately to Rusk and Bundy that he was disturbed at persistent stories, possibly emanating from the

²⁷ McCone letter to Krock, 26 April 1961, quoted in Parmet, 147; SNIE 58-1-62, "Relative Military Capabilities of Opposing Forces in Laos," 11 January 1962; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on Laotian Situation," 6 January 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; Bundy, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in the Cabinet Room on January 6, 1962, on the subject of Laos," and "Instructions Approved by President Kennedy," 28 February 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 572, 640-41; President Kennedy's statement at a press conference on 29 March 1962, *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1962*, 273-74; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Nature of United States Government Commitments" and FitzGerald memorandum to McCone, "Support to the Coalition Government in Laos," 16 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9.

The rationale for supporting Phoumi Noutsavan was ideological; as Adm. Harry D. Felt, the US Navy's CINCPAC, observed: "Phoumi is no George Washington. However, he is anti-Communist, which is what counts most in the sad Laos situation." Quoted in William M. Leary, "Foreword" to James E. Parker, *Covert Ops: The CIA's Secret War in Laos*, xi.

The US government's choice to back Souvanna Phouma seemed sensible at the time, as over the next few months Phoumi proved to be politically obstinate and militarily incompetent. The administration cut off aid to the Laotian army to show its displeasure with Phoumi's resistance to its prounutralist policy, and to press him to join a coalition government under Souvanna Phouma. Richard Helms complained, however,

²⁸ SNIE 58-3-62, "Implications of the Fall of Nam Tha," 9 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 726-29. President Kennedy derided the Royal Laotian Army as "clearly inferior to a battalion of conscientious objectors from World War I." William J. Rust, *Kennedy in Vietnam*, 55. (U)

²⁹ Michael Forrestal (NSC) memorandum, "Presidential Conferences on Laos," 10 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 734-35; McCone memorandum of meeting with the president, 10 May 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; McCone, "Addendum to Memorandum for the Record of May 10, 1962...Discussion with General Eisenhower..." and "Memorandum of Meeting at the White House...May 13, 1962..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXII/XXIV, Northeast Asia, Laos: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 277 and 278; Forrestal, "Memorandum for the Record...Presidential Conferences on Laos," 10 May 1962, and "Memorandum of Conversation," 13 May 1962, "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Kennedy and Acting Secretary of State Ball," 11 May 1962, "Memorandum of Discussion with Former President Eisenhower," 13 May 1962, McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion...The President and McCone Alone," 26 May 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 735, 741, 758-61, 795-96; Chester L. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam*, 172 n; Usha Mahajani, "President Kennedy and United States Policy in Laos, 1961-1963," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (September 1971): 91; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 110, 115; Parmet, 142. Secretary of Defense McNamara and JCS Chairman Lemnitzer joined McCone in briefing Eisenhower, who wanted the administration to take strong military action. The former president had stated publicly that trying to establish a coalition in Laos was harmful to US interests; it was "the way we lost China." Stephen E. Pelz, "When Do I Have Time to Think?" *DH 3*, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 223 n. 16. (U)

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Department of State, that CIA was undercutting US policy in Laos. Harriman, the chief US negotiator at Geneva, was committed to the talks' success—not for the sake of Laos, but for the larger geopolitical purpose of avoiding a US-Soviet clash—and did not want CIA's Hmong program to cause difficulties. The DCI could not say whether the derogatory rumors about the Agency originated in Vientiane or on the Georgetown cocktail party circuit, but he assured Rusk that he “could handle it without difficulty because Harriman was...an old friend of his.” This would not be the only time when affairs in Southeast Asia complicated McCone's relations with Harriman, as will be seen in the next chapter.³⁰ ~~XX~~

In early June 1962, the leaders of the three Laotian factions—the neutralist Souvanna Phouma, the royalist Phoumi Nousavan, and the communist Souphanouvong—agreed on a cabinet, enabling the Geneva talks to resolve outstanding issues quickly. At the time, McCone was on an official trip to Taiwan, Vietnam, and Thailand; a stop in Laos was canceled, lest it be interpreted in Vientiane as a sign that the US government thought Souvanna Phouma was *primus inter pares*. In Bangkok, the DCI discussed Laotian developments with Thai Prime Minister Sarit Dhanarajata, a reliable US ally who was alarmed at the prospect of a coalition government in Vientiane. The neutralists would not be able to contain communist attempts to expand their influence, he believed. McCone, speaking as a representative of the US government and its proneutralist policy, was somewhat more hopeful, suggesting that a power-sharing arrangement in Laos would help stabilize the region. Privately, however, he would have agreed with his Thai host.³¹ ~~XX~~

On 23 July 1962, the 15 nations participating in the Geneva discussions signed the “Declaration on the Neutral-

ity of Laos.” Harriman called it “a good bad deal.” Laos was declared neutral and was not to be used for infiltration into or subversion of adjacent countries. Souvanna Phouma became prime minister, Phoumi Nousavan and Souphanouvong were named deputy premiers, and all three factions received seats in a coalition cabinet. All foreign military personnel were to leave in 75 days, but unarmed civilians working on development and refugee assistance programs could stay. The Agency's Hmong fighters under Vang Pao were put on a defensive status, directed to stop harassment operations and to restrict themselves to intelligence collection and training. Compliance with the agreement was decidedly mixed. Between 23 July and 7 October, the date the agreement went into effect, all of nearly 700 US military personnel and all Soviet military advisers and aviators were pulled out. Moscow ended its airlift to the Pathet Lao in December. The North Vietnamese, however, withdrew only 40 soldiers past the border checkpoints, left upwards of 10,000 troops inside Laos, and continued using the border area to move men and supplies into South Vietnam. The Pathet Lao, moreover, refused to let the coalition government function in areas under communist control, and the International Control Commission could not enforce the accords.³² ~~XX~~

³⁰ Stevenson, 170; Carter, “Memorandum for Record on White House Meeting...12 May [1962]...,” McCone Papers, box 5, folder 14; McCone, “Memorandum of Discussion...The President and McCone Alone,” 26 May 1962,” *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 796; McCone, “Memorandum of Discussion with Secretary Rusk, 29 May 1962,” McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1; “Editorial Note,” *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIII, Southeast Asia*, 946-48. ~~XX~~

³¹ “Memorandum of Conversation...Meeting between Prime Minister Sarit and Mr. McCone,” and Embassy Bangkok telegram to Washington, EMBTEL 228, both 11 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1. ~~XX~~

³² Department of State, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1962*, 1075-83; Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 74; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 191-92; Schoenbaum, 391; “CIA-Meo Activities,” 51-55; Kenneth Conboy with James Morrison, *Shadow War: The CIA's Secret War in Laos*, 96; Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*, chap. 11; idem, *Laos: Keystone of Indochina*, 83ff.; Jane Hamilton-Merritt, *Tragic Mountains*, chap. 7; NSAM No. 189, “Presidential Meeting on Laos, September 28, 1962,” ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 3; “Meeting on Laos,” 28 September 1962, *Presidential Recordings: JFK, I*, 179-80. ~~XX~~

President Kennedy became all the more determined to stop the communists in Vietnam after receiving criticism for the Geneva agreement—a representative example of which appeared in *Time*:

The cease-fire in Laos came as a cold war defeat for the U.S.... Laos—with a Communist sympathizer at the head of the government, with Communists in posts of government power, and with Communist troops already holding half the nation—will quickly go behind the Iron Curtain.... Kennedy had declared he would “pay any price” to “assure the survival and success of liberty.” But the price in Laos seemed too high.... If the U.S. is to save South Viet Nam, it must be willing to get far more deeply involved—to the point of fighting, if necessary.

Quoted in Reeves, *President Kennedy*, 116. (U)

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[redacted]

After the Geneva agreement went into effect, CIA assumed full responsibility for training and supporting the 17,000 Hmong fighters. (At the time, Kong Le's neutralist forces numbered 10,000; the Pathet Lao's army had 20,000 fighters; and the Laotian army could field 48,000.) The Hmong's prominence grew because the White House had decided not to use military action under the SEATO pact to challenge communist violations of the Geneva agreement. Instead, it had to channel paramilitary support for Souvanna Phouma's government covertly through CIA rather than overtly through the Department of Defense.

[redacted] has written that to preserve the essence of an independent and neutral Laos, certain limited and carefully controlled departures from the implementing protocols had to be undertaken." Operational direction of the Hmong program came from Agency officers [redacted]

[redacted] McCone kept his hand on the issue through the SGC and discussions with Helms, FitzGerald, and William Colby. Policy-level direction of Agency activities came from the Department of State—in particular, Harriman, who even scrutinized individual supply flights, especially those carrying "hard rice" (arms and ammunition). After early 1963, CIA had a more sympathetic ear at Foggy Bottom. Harriman was promoted to under secretary of state for political affairs; his replacement was Roger Hilsman, a former commando in Burma during World War II, who thought himself an expert in guerrilla fighting and was much taken with the Agency's Hmong program.³⁴

As the Hmong project expanded, the political situation in Vientiane deteriorated. According to a CIA assessment, "Pathet Lao intransigence and persistent intrigues, coupled



Hmong tribesmen unload an Air America plane. (U)

with Premier Souvanna Phouma's indecisive leadership, have prevented any real progress toward a viable neutralist solution in Laos." Relations between Souvanna Phouma and Gen. Phoumi worsened, and neutralist forces on the Plain of Jars weakened under sustained Pathet Lao attacks. In April 1963, the White House decided to place Hmong guerrillas on the Plain in a battlefield role. This heavier reliance on local forces for conventional fighting relieved McCone, even if it violated the tenets of counterinsurgency and risked compromising whatever was still covert about the Agency's program. Although earlier he had not questioned the wisdom of deploying conventional US forces, McCone now thought that, at a minimum, doing so would further strain US-Soviet relations and cause political problems for the administration. He told Robert Kennedy and McGeorge Bundy that "dynamic military actions in Laos at a time when we were inactive against the festering situation in Cuba might save Khrushchev's position in Moscow[,] and it would have most serious effects on Kennedy in the United States." The DCI did not believe the American people would accept the commitment of military forces in faraway Laos when the administration was unwilling to take similar steps against a much closer and more serious threat in Cuba. "[L]et's not save Khrushchev at the expense of Kennedy," he counseled the White House. Both the attorney general and

³³ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Results and Highlights of Meeting held 28 July 1962 between Prince Souvanna Phouma, Mr. John A. McCone, [et al.]...", *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 879-81; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Nature of United States Government Commitments for Covert Assistance to General Phoumi," 22 August 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9.

³⁴ Douglas S. Blaufarb, "Organizing and Managing Unconventional War in Laos, 1962-1970," Report R-919-ARPA, prepared for Department of Defense, Advanced Research Projects Agency, 10, 19; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program," 23; Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 177-83; Conboy, *Shadow War*, 98.

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Bundy indicated that the president "understood this [McCone's argument] fully."³⁵ ~~XXXX~~

In addition, after witnessing the White House's indecision over worsening conditions in Vietnam (see next chapter), McCone may also have concluded that the time was not right for the United States to get further involved in Laos. If the president and his advisers could not make up their minds about what to do in the strategically more important country of Vietnam, they should not make a deeper military commitment in Laos—by then a secondary theater. In the meantime, he concluded, a not-so-secret proxy force would have to do the job. (U)

In June 1963, with the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao expanding their areas of control and attacking both neutralist and Hmong positions throughout Laos, the NSC authorized an escalation in the fighting, an increase in the Hmong force to 23,000, and expanded use of US Army and Air Force personnel ~~XXXX~~

~~XXXX~~ The objective now, according to Rusk, was "if not a truly neutral Laos under an effective government of National Union, [then] at least the façade of a neutralist government presiding over a stabilized de facto partition." ~~XXXX~~

The communists relaxed their offensive after mid-1963, partly owing to the rainy season, but also because they apparently judged that the risk of US military intervention was too high to jeopardize their secure hold on the eastern border region—a direct benefit to their North Vietnamese allies. The Hmong had some operational successes, notably

their disruption of Route 7, the main highway between North Vietnam and the Plain of Jars.³⁶ ~~(S)~~

By the end of 1963, the CIA-trained Hmong force numbered nearly 20,000 and was busy with a full range of guerrilla activities: sabotaging supply depots, mining roads, ambushing convoys, and generally harassing the stronger North Vietnamese enemy. Hanoi had to divert four battalions of regulars to counter the Hmong. The Agency also had deployed armed intelligence collection teams totaling approximately 3,300 Lao, Kha, and Yao tribesmen. Besides spying on the Pathet Lao and the Viet Minh in east-central Laos, these teams after mid-1963 also conducted small-scale guerrilla attacks. ~~XXXX~~

These activities, along with large amounts of overt bilateral aid and various diplomatic initiatives, were slow to work and never seemed sufficient. As of November 1963, according to a CIA analysis, "[r]eunification of Laos...appears more remote than ever"—especially with the communists controlling over 40 percent of the country. Increasingly, however, reunification was not the objective of the Laotian covert action program. A steady three-year infusion of American money and personnel and continual growth of the Hmong fighting force had turned CIA's Laotian program from a small, localized covert action effort into an officially unacknowledged adjunct to the intensifying conventional war in Vietnam. In 1961, departing President Eisenhower had warned John Kennedy that Laos was "the cork in the bottle," but after 1963, Dean Rusk observed, it was "only the wart on the hog of Vietnam."³⁸ (U)

³⁵ OCI Memorandum No. OCI 0516/63, "Situation in Laos," 29 March 1963, Bromley Smith (NSC), "Summary Record of the 511th National Security Council Meeting," 10 April 1963, Colby memorandum to McCone, "National Security Council Meeting on Laos, 20 April 1963," *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 948, 964-65, 987-88; ~~XXXX~~ CIA-Meo Activities," 68-70. ~~XXXX~~

³⁶ Forrestal untitled memoranda to the president, 14 and 18 June 1963, Forrestal memorandum, "Laos Planning," 19 June 1963 (parts of which were incorporated into NSAM No. 249, 25 June 1963, authorizing expanded covert actions in Laos), and Colby memorandum to McCone, "Operational Planning on Laos—19 June 1963," *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 1019-34; NSAM No. 256, "Laos Planning," 31 July 1963, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 4; Church Committee, "Report on Laos Paramilitary Program," 27; [Colby] memorandum to Special Group, "Review of Total CIA Program in Laos," 28 October 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 8; Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 211-13; Conboy, *Shadow War*, 100-102; Warner, *Shooting at the Moon*, 93-94; Blaufarb "Organizing and Managing Unconventional War in Laos," 34; ~~XXXX~~

Shooting at the Moon, 92-93. ~~XXXX~~

³⁷ Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, 227ff.; FE Division untitled memorandum on Laotian projects, 12 November 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-01389R, box 1, folder 8; ~~XXXX~~ summary histories of CIA covert paramilitary operations, December 1963, HS Files, HS/CSG-458, Job 83-00036R, box 3, folder 8; Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research memorandum, "Report of Subcommittee on US Support of Foreign Paramilitary Forces," 17 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 3. ~~(S)~~

³⁸ OCI, "The Situation in Laos," 1 November 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, XXIV, Laos Crisis*, 1054; Stevenson, 180. (U)

Waging Camelot's Counterinsurgencies (II): Vietnam (U)

What began as an intervention to bolster the American position in the Cold War," diplomatic historian Robert Schulzinger has written, "became by 1968 a major contributor to American dissatisfaction with the aims of post-World War II foreign policy. Involvement in Vietnam also undermined the global political and economic standing of the United States." The initial phase of that transformation occurred just before and during John McCone's service as DCI. Early in his presidency, John F. Kennedy decided that the best place in Southeast Asia to stand up to the communists was in Vietnam, not Laos.¹ He noted that of the two countries, Vietnam was more unified, had a larger and better-trained military, was more accessible to American air and naval power, and offered a wider geographic area for action without seeming to threaten the communist Chinese. In addition to these military and diplomatic considerations, Kennedy, having accepted the neutralization of Laos, believed that he had to make Vietnam the test case for US support for a pro-Western government in the region. Politically, the president resolved not to let the Democrats be blamed for "losing" another Asian country to communism, as they had been accused of "losing" China throughout the 1950s. The situation demanded immediate attention; opposition to the Saigon government was growing, the Viet Cong had kidnapped or assassinated 2,600 civilians (mostly officials and regime sympathizers) in 1960, and the guerrillas retained the initiative in the field in early 1961.²

Ruling out withdrawal and a diplomatic agreement that might not last, President Kennedy had several other policy options. He could fight the communists, either in a large-scale conventional war by putting as many US forces into combat as were needed to win (between 40,000 and 200,000 it was thought then, depending on how North Vietnam and the PRC reacted) or send in a smaller number of American troops (up to 25,000) to energize the South

Vietnamese. The president could increase US economic and military aid (including advisers) and use the aid to coax President Ngo Dinh Diem into political reform. Or he could give the South Vietnamese government all the money and weapons it needed to fight the war itself and keep the US presence to a minimum. Kennedy basically adopted the third option, with an increased number of US advisers insinuated into the military and civilian hierarchy in the capital and the countryside. That policy—informed by the recommendations that presidential advisers Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow made after a trip to South Vietnam in October 1961—was promulgated in National Security Action Memorandum No. 111 in late November. An American journalist gave the policy the enduring catchphrase "sink or swim with Ngo Dinh Diem."³ (U)

The US government, however, did not—and perhaps could not—exert enough pressure to get the obdurate and insular Diem to end nepotism in his ruling cadre, halt suppression of Buddhist and other dissidents, and improve the quality of his military commanders' leadership. According to a critical study of Kennedy's foreign policy, "[b]y giving Diem money and men, Kennedy backed a system of landlord rule in the countryside, which was deeply unpopular with the peasants, and by aiding the South Vietnamese security forces in their attempts to impose Diem's will on the villages, he identified the Americans with a repressive *ancien regime*." Over time, a paradoxical situation developed: increased US aid, which the administration saw as a possible lever of influence, only made Diem believe all the more that he was indispensable to Washington and dissuaded him from making the changes Kennedy and his advisers sought. Because of that stalemate, by mid-1963 an influential faction in the administration—including Michael Forrestal on the NSC, Roger Hilsman at the Department of State, and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge in Saigon—advocated abandoning the South Vietnamese leader and encouraging a military coup. Diem,

¹ Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War*, 273. For the president's rejection of establishing a neutral South Vietnam, see "Draft Memorandum of a Conversation, White House...May 1, 1962...", *FRUS, 1961-1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 367. (U)

² NIE 50-61, "Outlook in Mainland Southeast Asia," 28 March 1961, 7.

³ Maxwell Taylor letter to President Kennedy, with attached report, 29 October 1961, and NSAM No. 111, "First Phase of Viet-Nam Program," 22 November 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, I, Vietnam 1961*, 477-532, 656-57; Michael W. Cannon, "Raising the Stakes: The Taylor-Rostow Mission," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1989): 125-65; William Prochnau, *Once Upon a Distant War*, 48-49. "Diem is Diem and the best we've got," the president told his friend Benjamin Bradlee of the *Washington Post*. Benjamin C. Bradlee, *Conversations with Kennedy*, 58. Kennedy's decision built on a substantial legacy of assistance that had made South Vietnam the United States' fifth-ranking recipient of foreign aid. Between the time of the French withdrawal in 1954 and Kennedy's inauguration, Washington had channeled over \$1 billion there, and more than 1,500 Americans worked in-country as program administrators or military advisers. (U)

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they concluded, was the main impediment to defeating the communists and had to be forced out. By late 1963, the president agreed, albeit reluctantly, and the new shorthand for American policy became "the Ngos must go." In November, Diem was killed in a coup endorsed, though not engineered, by the US government.⁴ (U)

CIA Operations in Vietnam in the Early 1960s (U)

CIA's clandestine role in Vietnam grew after May 1961, when the White House authorized an expanded program of "intelligence, unconventional warfare, and political-psychological activities" on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two Vietnams. In January 1962, an interagency task force noted that support to irregular formations fell under the jurisdiction of neither the Pentagon's Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) nor the civilian aid mission of AID and recommended that CIA be made responsible. In May, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara went further, promising the head of the DDP's FE Division, Desmond FitzGerald, a "blank check...in terms of men, money and materiel." By midyear, McCone's CIA had become heavily engaged in Vietnam. In FY 1963, its paramilitary expenditures alone exceeded [redacted]. In FY 1964, even after CIA turned over paramilitary operations to the Department of Defense, its operational budget in Vietnam still approached [redacted].

McCone and his senior operations deputies oversaw the transformation of the Agency's secret activities in Vietnam from a heavy orientation toward espionage to one overwhelmingly weighted toward covert action.⁶ William Colby recalled that when he arrived as deputy chief of station in Saigon in 1959,

the object of the CIA officers was the collection of intelligence in the strictest professional sense of the word. None was involved in covert action, political, paramilitary, propaganda or otherwise, at the time, except to the extent that training South Vietnamese intelligence personnel in CIA's techniques strengthened them to face their Communist (and sometimes non-Communist) adversaries.⁷

Three years later, Saigon station's responsibilities had shifted predominantly toward counterinsurgency—or, as it came to be called in the Vietnam context by the mid-1960s, "pacification." Acting independently and in conjunction with US Army Special Forces and South Vietnamese personnel, Agency officers administered a range of programs whose overarching purposes were to train regime forces in combating communist subversion and to prepare rural inhabitants to resist the Viet Cong. By the summer of 1962, CIA activities included paramilitary, psychological warfare, civic action, intelligence collection, and trail-watching operations against the Viet Cong and support to the South Vietnamese government's Strategic Hamlet Program.

⁴ Lawrence J. Bassett and Stephen E. Pelz, "The Failed Search for Victory: Vietnam and the Politics of War," in Paterson, ed., *Kennedy's Quest for Power*, 224. See the Appendix on Sources for other published materials on Vietnam used in this work. (U)

⁵ NSAM No. 52 (untitled), 11 May 1961, with attachment on covert actions from Vietnam Task Force report, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342;

[redacted] unsigned memorandum, "FE Division Discussion of His Conversation with Secretary of Defense McNamara," 24 May 1962, *ibid.*, Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 4; FE Division, "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam Budget Summary," December 1963, and "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam—Paramilitary Operations," November 1963.

The interagency task force was established in April 1961 under the chairmanship of Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric. Its members included representatives from the White House (Rostow), CIA (FitzGerald), the Department of State (U. Alexis Johnson), the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Lansdale), the JCS, and USIA. "Editorial Note," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, I, *Vietnam 1961*, 74.

⁶ Details in this summary of CIA operations come from the above sources and the following: McCone memorandum to Special Group, "CIA Activities in Vietnam," [June 1962,] McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3; Thomas Parrott (NSC), summary histories of CIA clandestine and paramilitary operations, December 1963, HS Files, HS/CSG-458, Job 83-00036R, box 3, folder 8; FE Division, "North Vietnam Operations Plan," 29 December 1962, and "History of CIA in Vietnam," 26 June 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folders 7 and 13.

[redacted] Anern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, chaps. 3-4; *idem*, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chap. 11; CIA memorandum, "Chronology of CIA Involvement in Vietnam Paramilitary Programs," 2 July 1975, EA Division Files, Job 81-00336R, box 6; FE Division, "Covert Action Briefing Data: Vietnam—Air/Sea Operations into North Vietnam, 1961-1963," November 1963; Hilsman memorandum to Harriman, "Progress Report on South Vietnam," 18 June 1962, *DOD, US-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, 13 vols. (hereafter *Pentagon Papers/Defense ed.*), vol. 12, 469-80; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 142-79, 219-20; Colby, *Lost Victory*, chaps. 6-10; John Prados, *The Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, chaps. 5, 8; CIA, "Memorandum for the President: Counterinsurgency Activities Since January 1961," [July 1962,] HS Files, HS/HC-527, Job 84B00389R, box 1, folder 27; William Colby (FE Division) memorandum to McCone, "Saigon Station Activities," October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Sedgwick Tourison, *Secret Army, Secret War*, chaps. 2-3; Richard H. Shultz Jr., *The Secret War Against Hanoi*, 29-30, 62-63, 81-82; Kenneth J. Conboy and Dale Andradé, *Spies and Commandos*, chaps. 2-8. The last three works draw heavily on interviews with American and Vietnamese participants in the operations and on recently declassified reports prepared for the JCS in 1970.

⁷ Colby, *Honorable Men*, 149. (U)

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dozen paramilitary, reconnaissance, and civic action teams and planned to extend those operations to the border area with Laos. CIA also had some minor ancillary involvement in the Strategic Hamlet Program, the core of the Diem regime's counterinsurgency effort. While working with US Special Forces and AID in training and dispensing assistance to peasants who had been uprooted and moved into the protected enclaves, CIA officers collected intelligence on Viet Cong activities and personnel.⁸ ~~XX~~

The CIDGs were the most important of these elements. They were local militia units that engaged villagers in their own defense, for the purpose of taking the strategic offensive by expanding the territory under Saigon's control. An important element of the CIDG program was the strike forces, composed of ethnic and religious minorities, that patrolled territory between villages in the central and southern regions, set up ambushes, and reinforced communities under Viet Cong attack. Nearly 10,000 Vietnamese, including Montagnard tribesmen in the Central Highlands, had been trained and armed by mid-1962 for use in interdicting Viet Cong infiltration routes and providing intelligence on enemy activities. By early 1963, the CIDGs had some 38,500 men under arms, almost 11,000 of these in full-time strike force units. Also in the highlands, Agency officers were running three

CIA "psyops" included leaflet drops and black radio broadcasts designed to raise questions about North Vietnam's campaign against the South and about the communist leadership

⁸ On the CIDGs and the Strategic Hamlet Program, see especially [redacted] *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 44-62, 78-87, and Latham, 107-207. (U)

⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: [redacted] Tourison, chaps. 2-3; Prados, *Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, 37-40; Shultz, 29-30, 84-87, 135-36, 162-68, 175-77; Conboy and Andradé, viii, 50, 80, 101, 273; [redacted]

[redacted] 230; Knoche untitled memorandum to Helms, Action Memorandum No. B-34 (about U-2 flights along the North Vietnamese coast), 28 September 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 16. President Kennedy approved an expanded operational plan against North Vietnam in January 1963. Some unidentified members of the Special Group doubted that the program would reduce communist pressure in the South, and saw its value mainly as a bargaining point in future negotiations with Hanoi. Unsigned memorandum to Colby, "Minutes of 10 January 1963 Special Group Meeting," 11 January 1963, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 7. [redacted] Technical surveillance revealed that one reason so many of the airdrops were off-target was that the pilots were flying too high and too fast. Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, "Plausible Deniability: US-Taiwanese Covert Insertions into North Vietnam," *AIR Enthusiast* 84 (November-December 1999), online version at Web site www.airenthusiast.com; [redacted] 183. ~~XX~~

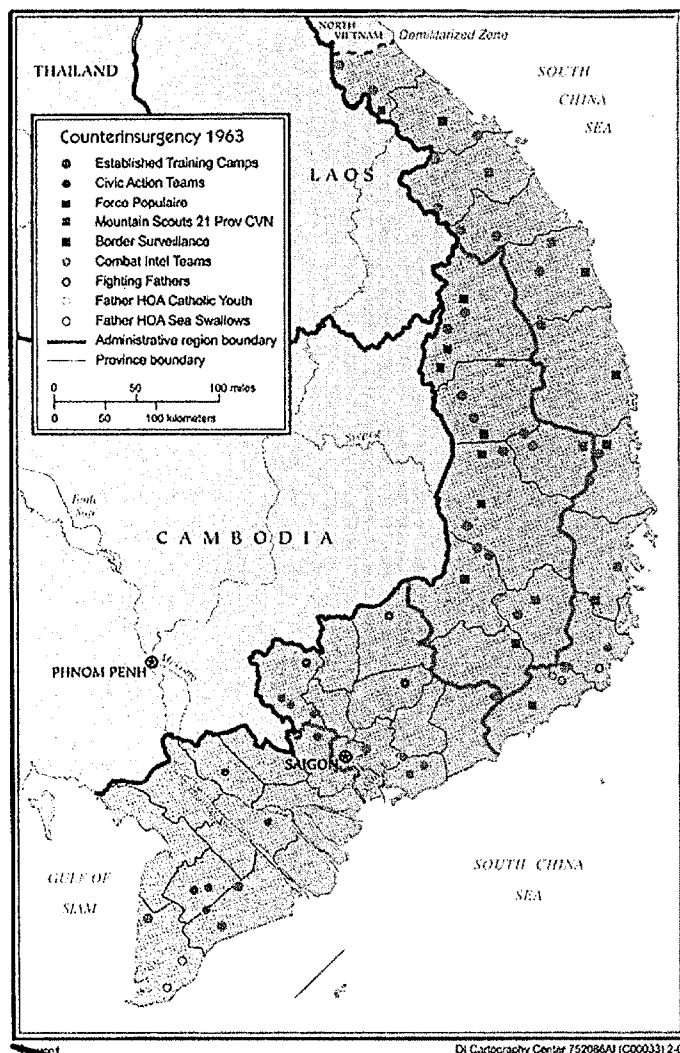
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and to show the existence of a fictitious resistance movement in the North. As with any psychological warfare activity, their effect was hard to gauge. The Agency officer in charge of the project called it "a small-budget operation," and feedback on the impact was hard to acquire in the police-state environment of North Vietnam. Lastly, during 1962, CIA began sending U-2s over the North; in the next two years, 36 missions were flown over both sides of the DMZ.

McCone on Vietnam: An Overview (U)

During his 23 months as Kennedy's DCI, McCone assumed several roles in informing, formulating, and implementing US policy in Vietnam. As the president's national intelligence officer, he presented increasingly pessimistic forecasts about South Vietnam's prospects and, at one point, compromised the objectivity of Agency analysis by intervening in



CIA's pilot counterinsurgency programs in Vietnam as of early 1963

the preparation of an important estimate. As a policy adviser, he emerged as a critic of the administration's cautious and sometimes contradictory approach to the conflict, and he strongly opposed Diem's removal. Finally, as director of CIA and the Intelligence Community, he oversaw the execution of covert actions, about which he was very skeptical, while balancing the Agency's interests against those of an ambitious and controlling ambassador in Saigon and of the US military, which was steadily taking over the intelligence war in Vietnam. (U)

In the case of Vietnam, McCone generally worked at the policy level and was not as deeply involved in the formulation and evaluation of CIA operations as he was with clandestine enterprises in other parts of the world.¹¹ He made few recorded comments about operations in Vietnam, although occasionally he offered suggestions.

For example, in 1963 he wanted news of increased defections from the Viet Cong publicized more widely in the

¹⁰ The success rate of [redacted] did not improve after the US Army's Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) took over the paramilitary program under Operation SWITCHBACK (see below) and attempted many more insertions at the same time that Hanoi was finding out about them ahead of time more easily. In 1963 alone, 15 of 17 teams were caught on landing. By the time the Johnson administration was carrying out the combined military program known as Operations Plan 34A-64 (OPLAN 34A) in 1964, all the previously inserted teams were under communist control. Through 1967, the US Army's Studies and Observations Group (SOG) was running only four of the nearly 30 teams it had sent into the North. In 1968, a joint CIA-DIA counterintelligence assessment concluded that Hanoi had doubled all the teams that CIA and SOG had presumed were legitimate. In sum, between 1961 and 1967, almost 500 men on 54 infiltration teams were captured or killed. Tourison, xviii, 315-16; Shultz, 83, 91-92, 317; Conboy and Andradé, 100, 274. (U)

¹¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 5 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 570-71, 576-77; Parrott, "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 19 September 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6; McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting...Subject: Increased Activities [redacted] 21 August 1962, ibid., box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum of the Meeting with the President...August 22, 1962," ibid., box 6, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of Special Group (5412)—January 3rd, 1963," and Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group Meeting...10 January 1963," ibid., box 1, folder 5; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Increased Viet Cong Defections in South Vietnam," 19 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342.

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South and called for maritime sabotage strikes against Haiphong harbor [redacted]

[redacted] He also advised the Special Group—consistent with his view on similar undertakings in Cuba—that infiltration and sabotage missions could not be turned on and off according to the vagaries of policy and that operators needed to be given more leeway in selecting targets. ~~X~~

As he did with US government military action later, however, McCone had doubts about the efficacy of covert action against the Vietnamese communists. Although he believed small-scale sabotage operations were useful tools in tactical counterinsurgency, he questioned whether the same activities on a large scale would accomplish much unless they were part of a full-bore offensive against North Vietnam.

[redacted] in response to tasking from the president and the secretary of defense. Once the Agency had received its orders, however—even if he disagreed with them—McCone would not countenance any bureaucratic resistance to their implementation. In that regard, he found the policy whims of subcabinet officials at the Department of State to be recurrent sources of frustration. In November 1962, he complained to Secretary of State Dean Rusk when Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman scotched an [redacted] He said that if a covert action plan developed in accordance with the wishes of the president and the secretary of defense was “dependent upon the mood” of an assistant secretary, then “the whole policy [should] be reviewed and perhaps the idea of an active program [redacted] cancelled.”¹² ~~X~~

McCone was consistently skeptical about the quality of the intelligence being sent to Washington, particularly from the military. He knew—and his own analysts continually

reminded him—of the lengthy record of slanted reporting from field commanders and of how the Pentagon's J-3 (operations) bureaucracy sanitized negative facts from its frontline accounts. The sanguine assessments he heard through official military channels or from personal contacts with serving or retired generals did not sway him. For example, he played golf at the elite Chevy Chase Club regularly with Marine Maj. Gen. Victor “Brute” Krulak, McNamara's special assistant for counterinsurgency and special activities and an inveterate optimist about US progress in Vietnam. McCone might have valued this time on the links with Krulak as a way of getting input for his own formulations about the situation. (At the same time, Krulak, an accomplished “schmooser,” may have pushed the relationship with the DCI—like him, a friend of Robert Kennedy's—in a futile attempt to win a sympathetic ear at Langley.) The DCI remained in touch with former President Eisenhower and heard from that devotee of the domino theory dire forecasts about the fate of Southeast Asia if the United States did not make a stand. The extent to which McCone assimilated the views of Krulak, who aspired to become Marine Corps Commandant, and the GOP's senior statesman cannot be determined, but it is safe to say their influence on him was far from decisive.¹³ (U)

Intelligence matters aside, McCone disagreed with many of the diplomatic and military tactics the administration was using in Vietnam and questioned whether the United States could achieve its objectives. He became frustrated over the discrepancy between President Kennedy's rhetoric and US actions. The president followed a cautious course, variously hesitant and improvisational, that belied his bold declarations about pushing back the communist tide. His limited commitment of aid and personnel, followed by their gradual expansion without clear guidance, exasperated McCone, who thought the administration should state its objectives unambiguously and use whatever means necessary to attain them expeditiously. Impatience, a search for clarity, and a penchant for efficiency characterized McCone's approach to the Vietnam question. Instead, he had to deal with drift and day-to-day reaction, a lack of strategic direction, and a failure of presidential leadership that encouraged factional infighting and forestalled substantial accomplishments. (U)

¹² McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...November 10, 1962...,” McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. ~~X~~

¹³ Harold P. Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes, 1962–1968*, 8–11; Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 276; Rust, 134–36; Hilty, 464–65; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 298; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 269. According to Krulak, it was during one of their golf dates that McCone said he did not have much confidence in Krulak's predecessor, Edward Lansdale. Shultz, 288. (U)

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On the larger policy questions, however, McCone is not on record as differing fundamentally with the administration's approach or even with recognizing its inadequacies. He did not doubt that the United States, free of the burden of colonialism and possessing unlimited resources, could succeed in Vietnam where France had failed. At no time did he argue for the neutralization of Vietnam through an international settlement—as was being attempted in Laos—or for leaving South Vietnam to its own devices. That said, neither did any other notable officials in the Kennedy administration other than Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles and Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith. Dean Rusk, George Ball, and Averell Harriman opposed sending ground troops into Vietnam and staking the US government to President Diem, but they still believed the United States should be involved through civilian and military assistance programs and covert action. A strategy of pure diplomacy and salutary neglect was off the table early on. (U)

Like other senior US officials, McCone thought conventionally in an unconventional setting. He had neither special knowledge of, or intuition about, communist revolutionary warfare, nor, despite the sophisticated analyses available to him, did he grasp the complex political and cultural nuances of the Vietnam conflict. If he appreciated the usefulness of CIA's pacification programs, he did not have much opportunity to act on that sense because of the transfer of CIA paramilitary operations to the Pentagon under Operation SWITCHBACK and the introduction of US ground forces. He saw the need to change tactics, but the most that can be said about his prescription—much-intensified clandestine operations against North Vietnam and nearly unrestricted bombing across the DMZ—is that it was not tried. (U)

In any event, McCone's voice in the administration had diminished after the Cuban missile crisis, and over time his persistent doubts about Vietnam further strained his relations with policymakers. In addition, the Departments of Defense and State dominated the Vietnam issue. Owing to the Country Team concept, the assertiveness of Ambassador Lodge, and SWITCHBACK, McCone had much less room to maneuver after mid-1963. As the political stakes on Vietnam rose, McCone grew wary of approaching administration leaders with gloomy prognoses. It was this caution that would cause him in 1963 to intrude into the estimative process. It was an experience that proved embarrassing and

counterproductive, and he would not repeat the error. For the rest of his tenure he upheld his analysts' assessments regardless of how they might discomfit US officials. (U)

McCone's Early Dissension (U)

Initially, McCone was not reluctant to contradict conventional wisdom. His training as an engineer and his background as an industrialist and businessman might have predisposed him to emphasize the same hard-and-fast, bottom-line criteria that so impressed Robert McNamara. After only 48 hours in Vietnam, McNamara—the numbers-crunching former systems analyst from the Ford Motor Company, whom Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) described as “an IBM machine with legs”—declared that “[e]very quantitative measure we have shows we're winning this war.” McCone, however, better appreciated the difficulty that low-level, incrementally escalating conventional tactics would have in offsetting the political and military ineptitude of the Diem regime and countering the ideological and psychological appeal of the communists. He was far less inclined than other so-called “hawks” to conclude that the United States and South Vietnam would prevail without a massive American military involvement (soon known as “going big”). McCone travelled to Southeast Asia in June 1962 to see the situation firsthand; he returned with a starkly more pessimistic account than McNamara, who a month earlier had declared that “victory is clearly attainable through the mechanisms that are now in motion.” The DCI's three-day orientation took him to Saigon for meetings with President Diem and his influential brother Nhu, the South Vietnamese defense minister, and the chief of MACV, Gen. Paul Harkins; to the large American base at Da Nang and nearby CIA and Special Forces training sites; and to a strategic hamlet and a redoubt where a South Vietnamese priest and Chinese refugees were holding out against Viet Cong insurgents.¹⁴ ~~SECRET~~

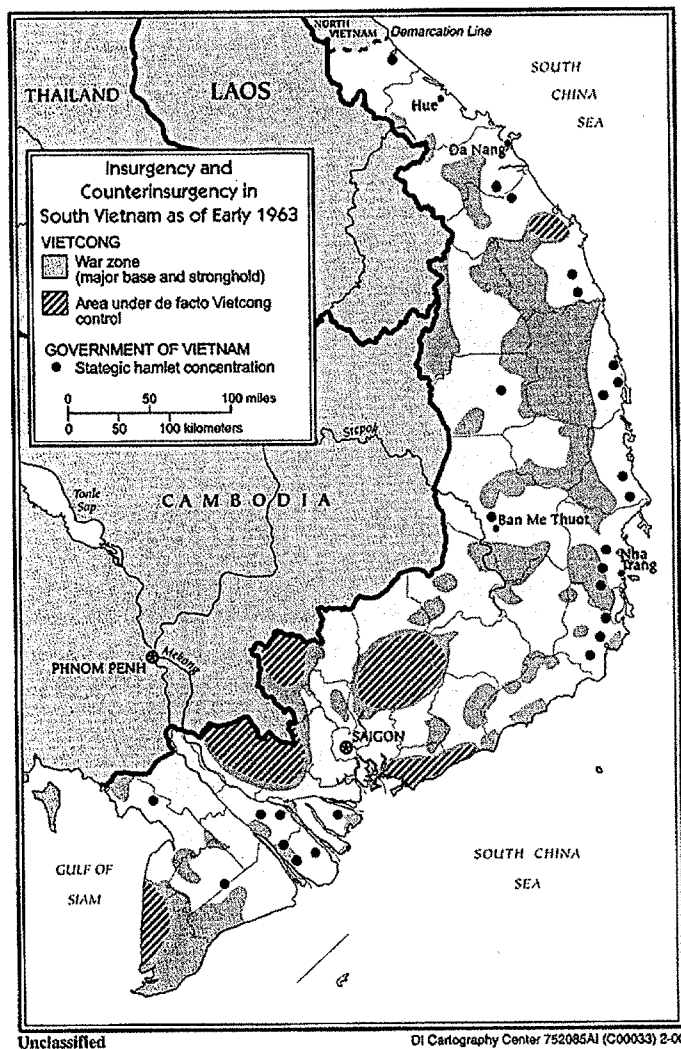
McCone's overall forecast was depressing. “The massive US contribution of arms, manpower, training and financial assistance already made or planned to counter the Communist threat to the area can at best arrest the trend,” he warned. A substantial increase in military and other aid would merely purchase “a measure of time.” Although he did not ignore the role of the Soviet Union and North Viet-

¹⁴ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 549; Department of Defense, “Visit to Southeast Asia by the Secretary of Defense, 8–11 May 1962,” *FRUS*, 1961–1963, II, *Vietnam 1962*, 387; Shapley, 146–52; Robert Mann, *A Grand Delusion*, 248; materials on McCone's trip in McCone Papers, box 5, folder 1 ~~SECRET~~

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nam, McCone viewed the PRC as the real enemy in Southeast Asia. Reversal and rollback of the communist threat to the region would not be possible, he predicted, unless the Communist Chinese were destabilized or at least distracted. To advance that strategic objective, he proposed introducing Nationalist China into the equation, with the possibility of large-scale airdrops and even seaborne landings of Nationalist troops on the mainland. Later, he concluded that such operations would accomplish little of value either inside the PRC or in the Vietnam theater, and instead advocated a massive escalation of US bombing attacks and covert operations against the North.¹⁵

Inside South Vietnam, McCone warned, a North Vietnamese push could be expected in the thinly defended Central Highlands, and Viet Cong efforts to counter the Strategic Hamlet Program should be anticipated, especially against "selected targets calculated to inflict the maximum psychological damage." The Viet Cong were developing new tactics, such as striking with larger units armed with heavy weapons, that might overwhelm the hamlets before South Vietnamese troops could respond. In the face of such determined opposition, according to McCone, it was essential that South Vietnam's government be strong and stable. Although dissatisfaction with the government persisted, McCone reported, Diem's



removal would accomplish little. A coup—successful or not—would only make dealing with the Viet Cong that much harder. After returning from his trip, the DCI told the secretary of defense that he was not encouraged that American policy in Vietnam would succeed. He regarded the administration's moves so far only as "holding actions" and said the United States was "merely chipping away at the toe of a glacier from the North."¹⁶

McCone's assessment of the situation in Vietnam represented a distinctly minority view in Washington. At least at that time, some degree of optimism about Western prospects in Vietnam seemed justified. The morale and effectiveness of South Vietnamese troops had risen after the influx of US

advisers and equipment. Fearsome helicopter-supported infantry attacks hurt the Viet Cong on the ground, and the array of overt and covert programs impeded communist inroads into the villages. Statistically, a corner appeared to have been turned: South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) units were initiating more actions and killing and capturing more Viet Cong than ever, and were losing fewer men through casualties and desertions.¹⁷

These gains were merely temporary, however, according to reports from VIP visitors and journalists. They only

¹⁵ [McCone], "General Conclusions," [19 June 1962,] McCone Papers, box 1, folder 3. Recent research in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russian records demonstrates that Beijing was Hanoi's most generous supporter at this time; see Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*, chap. 4.

¹⁶ Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense," 18 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; [McCone], "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of Meeting of Special Group (CI), 19 June 1962," EA Division Files, Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 6. McCone told Saigon station to watch developments in the Strategic Hamlet Program closely and to submit reports on its status at least once a month. Elder untitled memorandum to Helms and Colby, 16 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9.

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jolted Hanoi into increasing its level of materiel and personnel support to the southern insurgency. The Viet Cong soon learned how to fight American helicopters. The US Army's traditional strategy of attacking the enemy's ground forces was not working in a "people's war"—especially when American military intelligence officers defined the enemy only as regular troops and did not include village militias, political committees, and other vital elements of the insurgency. The communists were holding their own in the countryside and increasing their influence in urban areas. Pacification programs such as the strategic hamlets and the *Force Populaire* were so closely linked to the Ngos that they suffered as opposition to the Diem regime grew. "The fact was," then-CIA analyst Chester Cooper later wrote, "that the war was *not* going well, the Vietnamese Army was *not* taking kindly to American advice, and Diem was *not* following through on his promises to liberalize his regime or increase its effectiveness." In early November 1962, even the usually bullish Krulak could not say "yes" when the attorney general asked him if "we" were winning. In January 1963, the Viet Cong recaptured the military initiative by humiliating a superior ARVN force at Ap Bac in the Mekong Delta. Even with US air and artillery support, South Vietnamese units surrounded a Viet Cong battalion at most one-fourth as large but would not close, letting enemy fighters escape after they shot down five helicopters and killed several dozen ARVN soldiers and three American advisers.¹⁸

Some official assessments reflected the changing fortunes on the battlefield. Soon after the Ap Bac debacle, Roger Hilsman and Michael Forrestal returned from South Vietnam and observed that "we are probably winning, but certainly more slowly than we had hoped. At the rate it is now going, the war will last longer than we would like, cost more in terms of both lives and money than we had anticipated, and prolong the period in which a sudden and dramatic

event could upset the gains already made." "The most serious lack [in US policy]," they concluded, was "an overall plan keyed to the strategic concept." In other words, the administration may have known where it wanted to go, but it still did not know how to get there. A CIA analysis around the same time concurred with Hilsman and Forrestal. "[T]he war remains a slowly escalating stalemate," it stated, cautioning that statistical measures (for example, weapons captures, enemy casualties, and the number of small-unit attacks) were not reliable indices of the military situation or trends. Improvements in counterinsurgency programs (such as the strategic hamlets, the CIDGs, and "clear and hold" operations) were more than offset by the Saigon government's political mismanagement. The US military hierarchy remained optimistic, however. According to an investigative team reporting to the JCS, "The situation in South Vietnam has been reoriented, in the space of a year and a half, from a circumstance of near desperation to a condition where victory is now a hopeful prospect.... [U]nless the Viet Cong chooses to escalate the conflict, the principal ingredients for eventual success have been assembled." Most senior administration figures likewise persisted in making rosy pronouncements of the "light at the end of the tunnel" variety and planned for a phased withdrawal of American troops. This disjunction between working-level analysts' judgments and policymakers' prognostications contributed to the most serious distortion of intelligence during McCone's directorship—one for which he was largely to blame.¹⁹ (U)

The Intelligence Muddle (U)

"This is impossible," President Kennedy said angrily in September 1963 after yet another unproductive debate with his advisers over Vietnam. "[W]e can't run a policy when there are such divergent views on the same set of facts." That late in the administration, policymakers and intelligence officers still argued over not only what the "ground

¹⁷ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 444–45; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 982; R.B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 167; minutes of SGC meetings on 9 August and 13 September 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Southeast Asia Task Force, "Status Report on Southeast Asia," 27 July 1962, Forrestal memorandum to the president, "Situation in South Vietnam," 18 September 1962, Taylor trip report, "Impressions of South Vietnam," 20 September 1962, and Department of State, "Developments in Viet-Nam Between General Taylor's Visits..." (October 1962), *FRUS, 1961–1963, II, Vietnam 1962*, 478, 649–50, 660, 679–80; Hilsman memorandum to Harriman, "Progress Report on South Vietnam," 18 June 1962, *Pentagon Papers/Defense ed.*, vol. 12, 469–80; Carter untitled memorandum to McNamara, 11 July 1962, *The Pentagon Papers* 1, 684–89.

¹⁸ Bassett and Pelz, "The Failed Search for Victory," 241–42; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...CI Special Group Meeting...5 November 1962," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 4; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 113; Cooper, 196 (emphasis in original); Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 259–62; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 448–49; Sheehan, 201–67; "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 1–3.

¹⁹ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 464–65; OCI Memorandum No. OCI 02142/63, "Current Status of the War in South Vietnam," 11 January 1963, Hilsman and Forrestal memorandum to the president, "A Report on South Vietnam," 25 January 1963, "JCS Team Report on South Vietnam," January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, III, Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 19–22, 49–62, 73–94 (quotes at 22, 52, 53, 91, 94). Chester Cooper, at the time a senior analyst in ONE, later wrote that the use of various statistical indices—kill ratios, body counts, battlefield incidents, weapons losses and captures, and the like—was "all very quantitative, very scientific, and very misleading." *Lost Crusade*, 202. (U)

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truth" in Vietnam *meant*, but, more fundamentally, what it *was*. The president could not get his advisers to agree on either, no matter how many fact-finding missions he sent out or how much information the Intelligence Community acquired. After listening to starkly contrasting reports from a senior diplomat and a high-ranking military commander who had just been to Vietnam together, Kennedy asked, with evident exasperation, "You two did visit the same country, didn't you?"²⁰ (U)

CIA—principally the DI—added to this confusion with its long record of pessimistic assessments about the war in Vietnam and its own internal disputes over US policy and its prospects.²¹ Officers who produced finished intelligence—specifically, analysts in ONE, ORR, and the South Vietnam Branch of OCI—exhibited the most skepticism of official pronouncements and consistently doubted the likelihood of victory over the Vietnamese communists. These analysts had experience, in some cases dating back to the late 1940s, with diplomats and military officers mishandling and distorting information and reaching unwarranted positive conclusions. (They judged the reporting from CIA's Saigon station as more reliable, however, because the chiefs of station imposed stricter requirements on sourcing and accuracy.) There was not an institutional "groupthink" at the Agency, however. Analysts in the North Vietnam Branch of OCI were more hopeful that their counterparts in the South Vietnam Branch, and some DDP officers at Langley and overseas enthusiastically shared the administration's optimism. Other operators, including some in Saigon station, had serious qualms about the Diem regime. Adding to the confusion was an Intelligence Community coordination process that muted differences in the pursuit of interagency consensus. As a result, relatively few in the administration heard the sharper-toned judgments of the DI's pessimists, who often were dismissed, undeservedly, for expressing narrow, departmental opinions.²² ~~SECRET~~

McCone, who generally had great faith in the CIA's intellectual capabilities, believed that one important way to clar-

ify the confusion was to put the Agency's own "best and brightest" on the Vietnam account. He was confident that they would report events from the field fairly and comprehensively, and analyze them objectively. McCone acted on this belief after William Colby returned from Vietnam in mid-1962 and replaced FitzGerald as chief of FE Division. He arranged a rotation system for officers in Vietnam, contending that other geographic divisions in the directorate should share the dangers and rigors of duty there. McCone revoked the plan. Colby recalls that the DCI

looked at me with his steely eyes and said coldly, "Mr. Colby, the President believes that Vietnam is the most important task this nation faces, and wants our very best men assigned there. You will assign the best and most qualified men we have and keep them there, and I do not want to hear any more talk of sharing the duty with less qualified ones."

Colby credits McCone's openness and candor with maintaining morale inside CIA and upholding the Agency's reputation for analytical honesty:

His careful insistence on hearing out every side before taking a position himself and his meticulous forwarding of the raw evidence to the other departments and agencies, whether or not it supported his conclusions, produced an atmosphere in which the sincerity and integrity of all were respected, and all knew that their case had been made, whether finally accepted or not.²³ (U)

Colby's evaluation of his director was too generous, however. In one of the most puzzling events in McCone's tenure, he insisted in early 1963 that the community produce an optimistic estimate of Vietnam's future—by inference validating the Kennedy administration's approach to Vietnam. At a meeting of USIB on 27 February 1963, before dozens of community principals and their staffers, McCone reproved the director of ONE, Sherman Kent and his

²⁰ Bromley Smith (NSC) memorandum of conference with the president, 10 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 162. (U)

²¹ Between 1950 and late 1964, ONE published more assessments on Vietnam than any other country except the Soviet Union—48 estimates and 51 memoranda to the DCI. Through the first two years of McCone's tenure, the figures were five and seven, respectively. ~~SECRET~~

²² Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 8-14; idem, "Why CIA Analysts Were So Doubtful About Vietnam," *Studies* 40, no. 2 (1996): 43; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 207-8. ~~SECRET~~

²³ Colby, *Honorable Men*, 208, 229. At this stage in the war, McCone did not ask USIB to direct its component agencies to undertake special collection efforts against the Vietnam target. Presumably, he found the existing programs of CIA and the military intelligence services to be sufficient. The multivolume history of USIB drafted by its executive secretary for many years, James B. Lay, does not discuss Vietnam as a priority collection issue until the Johnson administration. See "The United States Intelligence Board, 1958-1965," vol. 4, 269-73, vol. 5, 78-142. ~~SECRET~~

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analysts for preparing an alarmist estimate that diverged from the judgments of, in the DCI's words, "the people who know Vietnam best." In his capacity as chairman of USIB, McCone remanded the estimate and ordered ONE to solicit and incorporate in a revised NIE the views of a number of senior policymakers. Among them were five "bulls"—the Army's chief of staff, Gen. Earle Wheeler; the commander of US military forces in the Pacific, Adm. Harry Felt; the commander of MACV, Gen. Harkins; the Pentagon's counterinsurgency chief, Maj. Gen. Krulak; and the US ambassador to South Vietnam, Frederick Nolting—who supported keeping Diem in power, sending in more American troops, and expanding conventional military operations. Providing partial balance were two "bears"—Roger Hilsman and Michael Forrestal—who also wanted the United States to intervene more forcefully but doubted that Diem could salvage the situation and probably should be replaced. Colby and the chief of station in Saigon, John Richardson—both pro-Diem—provided input for CIA. All of those "people who knew Vietnam best" criticized the draft estimate for concluding that the Viet Cong had not been badly hurt, for overstating the Diem government's military and political shortcomings, and for underemphasizing progress with the strategic hamlets and in relations between American military advisers and South Vietnamese officers. The policymakers took special issue with the NIE's criticisms of the South Vietnamese army. The CINCPAC, Adm. Felt, went so far as to imply that ONE was peddling Hanoi's propaganda.²⁴ ~~SECRET~~

On 17 April 1963, BNE produced a revised, final version, NIE 53-63, that conveyed a more upbeat view. Some basic judgments were altered, and a more encouraging tone adopted. The first sentence signaled the change resulting from McCone's remand of the estimate: "We believe that Communist progress has been blunted and that the situation is improving." Other encouraging judgments included:

Assuming no great increase in external support to the Viet Cong, changes and improvements which have occurred during the past year now indicate that the Viet Cong can be contained militarily and that further

progress can be made in expanding the area of government control and in creating greater security in the countryside....

Developments during the last year or two also show some promise of resolving the political weaknesses, particularly that of insecurity in the countryside upon which the insurgency has fed.

The estimate was not unrelentingly reassuring, however:

[T]here are as yet no persuasive indications that the Communists have been grievously hurt....

[T]he [South Vietnamese] government's capacity to embark upon the broader measures required to translate military success into lasting political stability is questionable....

Despite South Vietnamese progress, the situation remains fragile....

[N]o quick and easy end to the war is in sight.

Nevertheless, the estimate's essential point, the DCI later told President Kennedy, was that the community had "indicated we could win" in Vietnam.²⁵ ~~SECRET~~

Why did McCone leave himself vulnerable to charges that he skewed analysis to support administration policy? ONE's substantive experience and generally accurate forecasts would seem to suggest that McCone could trust its earlier, unencouraging conclusions. Moreover, he surely was aware that the strategic implications of unwarranted optimism could be grave; distorted reporting during France's war in Indochina had bred overconfidence that contributed to its defeat. But several more compelling considerations predisposed the DCI to question his senior estimators. (U)

Foremost was McCone's low regard for ONE at the time. He was still under fire from the White House and PFIAB for ONE's erroneous USSR-Cuba missile SNIE from the

²⁴ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 12-17; [redacted] Cooper, 202-4; Matthias, *America's Strategic Blunders*, 185-90; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 206-7; John Prados, *Lost Crusader*, 105-7. ~~SECRET~~

²⁵ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 17; NIE 53-63, "Prospects in South Vietnam," 17 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, III, *Vietnam, January-August 1963*, 232-34 (condensed version; the full-text version is on file in the History Staff); Willard C. Matthias, "How Three Estimates Went Wrong," *Studies* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1968): 31-35; Colby memorandum of meeting with President Kennedy, 10 September 1963, excerpted in John S. Earman (OIG) memorandum to McCone, "Record on Vietnam," 12 November 1964 (hereafter "CIA IG Report on Vietnam"), 15, OIG Files, Job 74B00779R, box 1, folder 2. The draft NIE is compared to the final version in [redacted] ~~SECRET~~

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previous year, and so was hardly likely to take at face value his analysts' judgments on such a divisive and unclear matter as Vietnam. He could not hope to repair the damage the Agency's analytical reputation had suffered during the missile crisis if he approved an estimate so at odds with many senior policymakers without explicitly taking their views into account. McCone also was still irritated personally with Sherman Kent and no doubt remembered that just before the flawed missile SNIE, the ONE chief had flatly disagreed with him over the basic dynamics of the Indochina conflict. The DCI believed communist China was aiding and abetting a Marxist-Leninist insurgency, while Kent and his staff contended that popular disaffection with a ruling class of mandarins was the root cause of South Vietnam's travail. If CIA's best minds had been so wrong about Cuban missiles, why should he defer to them on the more complex question of Vietnam?²⁶ (U)

McCone also had reason to question the substance and reliability of ONE's latest assessment on Vietnam. His analysts had not been consistent during the months before. In memoranda in May and October 1962 they had vacillated from despair to hope. The former stated that the best the United States could get out of Vietnam was "an uneasy and costly colony"; the latter concluded that the joint American-South Vietnamese counterinsurgency program was working. Now the draft NIE, under consideration for six months, painted a markedly more dismal picture. McCone was not convinced developments in Vietnam since October justified another shift in judgment. Moreover, many knowledgeable and experienced CIA officers disagreed with ONE's line—notably the senior headquarters and field officers on the account, Colby and Richardson—and gave the DCI reason to believe he had a solid basis for not accepting the estimate as written. ~~XX~~

Beyond the ONE product itself, a larger factor in McCone's thinking was the growing attention President Kennedy was giving Vietnam in early 1963. Kennedy had focused on other international issues and flash points and did not spend much time on Vietnam until the spring of 1963. In response to heightened White House interest, McCone stopped being mainly an occasionally carping policy executor and put himself in a better position to influence policy. Not having overcome the resentment that adminis-

tration principals felt toward him for being right about Soviet missiles in Cuba, he did not want to antagonize them further by again being a contrarian. In addition, McCone would have had trouble in the White House defending an assessment that did not clearly take into account recent presidential fact finding missions. (U)

McCone had to consider interdepartmental relations as well—particularly those with the Department of Defense. Already engaged in high-stakes battles with Secretary McNamara and the Pentagon, he must have been leery about approving an estimate that implied that American military advisers were not doing their jobs well enough. ONE's draft stated that among South Vietnam's "very great weaknesses" were

[a] lack of aggressiveness and firm leadership at all levels of command, poor morale among the troops, lack of trust between peasant and soldier, poor tactical use of available forces, a very inadequate intelligence system, and obvious Communist penetration of the South Vietnamese military organization.

US military (and civilian) personnel had been trying to correct these deficiencies for years. A senior official at the Pentagon or the White House might reasonably infer from the quoted language that hundreds of Americans had spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars for naught. That implication was too troubling for McCone to let by under his signature. (U)

The DCI's intervention quickly proved to be a blunder. Soon after the revised estimate was distributed in Washington, events in Saigon, Hue, and elsewhere in the South invalidated its key judgments. In May, antigovernment rioting and demonstrations broke out, and in June, the first of several Buddhist monks set himself on fire. Repression of activist monks and their supporters in the cities claimed much of the Diem government's attention, distracting it from expanding the Strategic Hamlet Program. By the summer of 1963, the counter-insurgency campaign was paralyzed. As communist insurgents and domestic dissidents besieged the regime, it became clear that McCone's ONE had produced another authoritative but inaccurate estimate. Supposedly above the political fray, CIA and other

²⁶ Kent memorandum to McCone, "The Communist Threat in Southeast Asia," 24 May 1962, National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC) Files, Job 79R00904A, box 8, folder 2. Journalist A.J. Langguth, in *Our Vietnam: The War, 1954-1975*, states, without citing evidence, that Krulak persuaded McCone to revise the estimate (240). The documentary record contains nothing to support that contention. (U)

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community analysts had confirmed the unfounded expectations of progress that many senior policymakers had long entertained. As *The Pentagon Papers* would later note, the estimate was "not only wrong, but more importantly...[it was] influential." When ill-advised hopes were dashed, the standing of McCone and CIA was diminished.²⁷ (U)

BNE defended the estimate for some weeks, but, in July, McCone approved an update predicting that unrest would grow and that the odds of a coup or assassination attempt against President Diem would rise to better than even. Although McCone opposed a coup, he did not interfere with the production of this special estimate—the key judgments of which could have left readers guardedly optimistic about the beneficial effects of a sudden change in regime: "given continued support from the US, [a successor military-civilian elite] could provide reasonably effective leadership for the government and the war effort." Also around that time, BNE issued another special estimate that flatly contradicted one of McCone's basic beliefs about the war—"Communist policy and action in South Vietnam appears to be almost wholly dictated by Hanoi," it said. There is no evidence the DCI tried to steer its conclusions toward blaming Beijing.²⁸ ~~SECRET~~

In the weeks that followed, worsening conditions in Vietnam forced McCone to retreat further from the bottom line of NIE 53-63 when he discussed the issue with administration officials. He tried to put the best face possible on the changed view between April and June–July by ignoring the estimate and referring to the Agency's long record of pessimism. "A review of our reporting over 18 months and resulting estimates bears out that the Agency consistently warned of the deteriorating situation and the possible consequences," he told the White House in September. "[V]ictory is doubtful if not impossible." If the Saigon government mishandled the Buddhist problem, it would put its survival and the safety of US troops at serious risk. Accord-

ing to PFIAB Chairman Clark Clifford, the "normally cautious and conservative" McCone told board members around then that the situation had gotten so bad in Vietnam, "we might have to pull out altogether." In an "EYES ONLY" letter to Ambassador Lodge, the DCI wrote, "I am more disturbed over the situation which has developed in South Vietnam than any recent crisis which has confronted this government."²⁹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone later apologized to Kent, admitted he had been wrong for intruding into the estimative process, and promised he would not do it again. He was true to his word. The NIE episode had another benefit for CIA that somewhat offset the discomfort and embarrassment McCone had caused it. His contrition and support for subsequent Agency assessments, no matter how dissonant they sounded to policymakers, helped steel analysts against the strong pressures they felt during the Johnson administration to "get on the team." Knowing the DCI would not undercut them, DI analysts warned repeatedly that US military escalation by itself would not save South Vietnam, and in 1964 they were emboldened enough to directly contradict the domino theory. Likewise, McCone did not change his gloomy outlook for the rest of his tenure, despite the damage it did to his relationships with two presidents.³⁰ ~~SECRET~~

Operation SWITCHBACK (U)

While McCone was clashing with the Department of Defense over control of military and technical intelligence assets and differing with its assessments of the "ground truth" in Vietnam, he had to deal with another large-scale bureaucratic issue involving the military: the transfer of CIA paramilitary activities in Vietnam to the Pentagon. This transfer, which significantly reduced the Agency's role in influencing events in the field and in policymaking circles, came about for several reasons. The failed Bay of Pigs

²⁷ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 20. (U)

²⁸ Kent memorandum to McCone, "NIE 53-63, Prospects in South Vietnam in Light of the Current Buddhist Crisis," NFAC Files, Job 79R00904A, box 9, folder 3; SNIE 53-2-63, "The Situation in South Vietnam," 10 July 1963, 6; SNIE 14.3-63, "The Impact of the Sino-Soviet Dispute on North Vietnam and Its Policies," 26 June 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, III, *Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 421. George Carver of ONE went so far as to assert to McCone in late August that "the best hope for the preservation of US interests and the attainment of US objectives in South Vietnam lies in the possibility of an early coup d'état by anti-Communist nationalists with sufficient military strength to obviate prolonged civil war." Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 621. ~~SECRET~~

²⁹ McCone memorandum reviewing CIA's intelligence performance regarding Vietnam, 21 September 1963, cited in Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 680–81; Colby memorandum of meeting with President Kennedy on 10 September 1963, excerpted in "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 15; ~~SECRET~~

Clark Clifford and Richard Holbrooke, "Annals of Government, The Vietnam Years," Part I, *New Yorker*, 6 May 1991, 45; McCone letter to Lodge, 19 September 1963, quoted in Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 672. ~~SECRET~~

³⁰ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 17–18; ONE memorandum to McCone, "Would the Loss of South Vietnam and Laos Precipitate a 'Domino Effect' in the Far East?," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. ~~SECRET~~

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operation in April 1961 raised serious doubts inside the White House about the Agency's ability to run large paramilitary operations. The DDP lacked the manpower and resources to manage undertakings as extensive and vital as the CIDGs indefinitely without degrading its ability to conduct espionage and covert action worldwide. Lastly, Washington viewed Vietnam principally as a military problem, with the Pentagon as the lead executor, and CIA's operations inevitably would be subordinated to military concerns.³¹ ~~✗~~

In June 1961, the White House decreed a division of responsibility for paramilitary activities. The Department of Defense would "normally receive responsibility for overt paramilitary operations" and "[a]ny large paramilitary operation wholly or partly covert." "[W]holly covert or disavowable" paramilitary projects "may be assigned to CIA, provided that it is within the normal capabilities of the [A]gency." By mid-1963, CIA was to turn over to the Department of Defense its paramilitary responsibilities and assets in Vietnam—involving a total of over [] trained and armed indigenous personnel—and concentrate on espionage, political operations, and propaganda. The transition program was named SWITCHBACK, a revealing misnomer implying the Pentagon had directed the Agency's paramilitary enterprises in the past. The military's newly acquired projects would be run by MACV, which had superseded MAAG—in a reflection of the shift in US focus from assistance to operations. (MACV, however, was not that anxious to take on these CIA projects; SWITCHBACK was Washington-driven.) (U)

The transition started erratically but ground along without major delays despite its size and sensitivity. The interdepartmental agreement was reached in July 1962; the turnover of all paramilitary projects, scheduled for 1 July 1963, was completed the following November. The largest undertaking that CIA gave up was the CIDGs, by then numbering over [] local fighters in several forces. The Agency also relinquished control of [] Mountain Scouts, who operated in the Central Highlands; the [] member

Combat Intelligence Teams, which targeted the Viet Cong infrastructure; and border surveillance and cross-border units with more than [] personnel. []

McCone and most CIA officers, at Headquarters and in the field, viewed SWITCHBACK as ill-conceived and harmful to US interests. From the Agency perspective, US Special Forces—"gung ho" to prove they could do a better job than the civilian "spooks"—spurned the advice of more experienced Agency paramilitary officers. The shift from political and psychological to more purely military activities disrupted the operational environment, severed many long-cultivated relationships with local officials, disrupted effective "psywar" and civic action initiatives, and reduced the effectiveness of the pacification programs, notably the CIDGs and the Mountain Scouts. The military's more formal command structure replaced CIA's relatively flexible arrangements. By mid-1964, several months after the changeover had been finished, FE Division Chief Colby concluded that "it is probably fair to say that the SWITCHBACKed paramilitary and irregular forces were critically impaired by the more rigid mold into which they were forced by conventional US military requirements."³³ ~~✗~~

Even as problems with SWITCHBACK arose, and notwithstanding his own reservations, McCone did not try to impede the program. With a losing record in contests with the Pentagon, the White House behind the changeover, and the American military presence in Vietnam increasing steadily—from about 3,100 at the end of 1961 to more than 16,000 two years later—he saw little point in fighting it. The "militarization" of covert operations seemed inevitable. Possibly, too, he judged that the difficulties encountered in SWITCHBACK to that point were not egregious enough to raise with the White House or the SGC. Moreover, the transfer had the virtue of lifting a large financial burden

³¹ NSAM No. 57, "Responsibility for Paramilitary Operations," 28 June 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VIII, National Security Policy*, 113; NSAM No. 162, "Development of US and Indigenous Police, Paramilitary and Military Resources," 19 June 1962, ER Files, Job 84B00513R, box 9, folder 2; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 117. ~~✗~~

³² *Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency (for Fiscal Year 1964)*, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 7, 137; Colby memoranda to McCone, "Status Report—Operation SWITCHBACK...", 29 November 1962, and "OPERATION SWITCHBACK," 13 June 1964, *ibid.*, Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; Colby memorandum, "Operation SWITCHBACK," 27 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 10; Research Analysis Corporation, "US Army Special Forces Operations under the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups Program in Vietnam, 1961-1964," Technical Memorandum RAC-T-477, prepared for Department of the Army, April 1966, 40-53; [] "Operation SWITCHBACK, May 1961-June 1964," EA Division Files, Job 72-00233R, box 1, folder 6; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, chap. 4; Krepinevich, 71-75; Conboy and Andradé, chap. 9. MACV [] had scant success against a more vigilant enemy; 13 of 16 teams sent into North Vietnam during 1963 were captured soon after landing. Tourison, 315-16. ~~✗~~

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from the Agency and placing it on the Department of Defense.³⁴ ~~XX~~

From the first, McCone appreciated the political and operational difficulties SWITCHBACK would cause in US dealings with the Agency's South Vietnamese contacts. He had inserted into the July 1962 memorandum of understanding with the Pentagon a passage calling for the military to respect "well-established liaison relationships with GVN officials both in Saigon and at the provincial level." Saigon station was to broker MACV's takeover of these contacts. In Hawaii, CINCPAC Adm. Felt adamantly disagreed with that proviso, however, and told MACV chief Harkins to establish his own liaison arrangements, independent of CIA. The administration never explicitly endorsed Felt's approach, but it prevailed in practice and was never set right according to McCone's intentions.³⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone was persuaded that imprecise language in the NSC directives about SWITCHBACK might harm CIA to the military's gain, and so needed correction. DDP Richard Helms warned him that Pentagon officials were interpreting the phrase "wholly or partly covert" in NSAM No. 57 to mean that the military had the authority to engage in all types of covert actions, not just paramilitary operations. McCone attempted to introduce a revision, giving CIA responsibility for all covert actions, paramilitary or not. The

Department of Defense would not concur, and McCone acceded to supporting the Pentagon's overt paramilitary operations and referring "gray areas" to the Special Group for resolution.³⁶ ~~XX~~

One of those gray areas was funding. CIA had to administer Department of Defense funds for SWITCHBACK-related projects until FY 1963 ended on 30 June 1963. McCone wanted to be sure that when the Agency surrendered those programs to the Pentagon, it got back the [] allocated for them that fiscal year. Where the generals got the money to pay for their new responsibilities "was a DoD problem," he said. The Pentagon agreed to repay [] but balked at the rest, arguing that a special authorization from Congress was needed. Bureaucratic bargaining was required to settle accounts. In a memorandum of understanding signed in June 1964, the Department of Defense agreed to assume funding for SWITCHBACK programs in FY 1965 (beginning 1 July 1964).

³³ Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 113-14, 130-33; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at Special Group Meeting—16 May 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; Saigon station cable 7326, 10 May 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 10; Colby memorandum to McCone, "OPERATION SWITCHBACK," 13 June 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961-1971*, 35-74. ~~XX~~

The CIDG program—probably the most successful of the Agency's pacification initiatives—was SWITCHBACK's most serious casualty. Although MACV made improvements in logistics and succeeded in mobilizing personnel for CIDG service, it had trouble retaining permanent assets. Its use of the village-based defense units for counterinsurgency patrols, sometimes far from the locals' homes, caused morale to plummet, desertions to rise, and enrollments to diminish. Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 135; "US Army Special Forces Operations under the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups Program in Vietnam, 1961-1964," 220-24; Colby, *Lost Victory*, 165-67. ~~XX~~

McCone's concerns about the US military's management of former CIA programs did not just reflect his departmental view. Averell Harriman and U. Alexis Johnson at the Department of State made similar criticisms. Colby untitled memorandum of meeting with Harriman, 6 February 1963, and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency)...," 7 February 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8. ~~XX~~

³⁴ Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 24; McCone, "Memorandum on Special Group Meeting—11 March 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; draft blind memorandum, "Resolution of Funding Problems Relative to CIA and DOD," c. early to mid-1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8. ~~XX~~

³⁵ Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 117; Colby memorandum to DCI William Raborn, "Decline in Numbers and Effectiveness of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) Program from 1963 to 1965," 17 December 1965, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 12. ~~XX~~

³⁶ Helms memorandum to McCone, "Proposed Revision of NSAM No. 57," 22 January 1963, ER Files, Job 86B00269B, box 8, folder 43; Carter memorandum to McCone, "Funding for Counterinsurgency and Paramilitary Operations," 22 February 1963, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 12, folder 2; Cord Meyer (CA Staff) memorandum to Carter, "Paramilitary Action Responsibilities of CIA and the Department of Defense," 20 August 1963, *ibid.*, box 19, folder 1; John Bross (NIPE) memorandum to McCone, "Paramilitary Operations," 13 December 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 128. In early 1964, Helms again raised with McCone the issue of revising NSAM No. 57, but the DCI did not press the point with the White House. []

³⁷ John Bross (Comptroller) memorandum to Carter, "Operation SWITCHBACK," 16 January 1963, with attached letter from McCone to Gilpatrick, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 8; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412—31 January 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 4; Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in Vietnam*, 133-34; [] "Operation SWITCHBACK," 14-38; [] "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Department of Army Representatives concerning Financial Aspects of Operation SWITCHBACK," 17 September 1963, EA Division Files, Job 66-00436R, box 1, folder 10; "Memorandum of Understanding...Budget Responsibility for Counterinsurgency Activities in Vietnam," 5 June 1964, DCI Files, Job 95G00278R, box 1, folder 38. ~~XX~~

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After SWITCHBACK was nearly complete, McCone sought and received Special Group approval to realign the activities of Saigon station away from supporting the US military and more toward the Agency's own responsibilities in espionage, counterintelligence, [redacted]. One of the drawbacks of SWITCHBACK, he told the Special Group, was that as much as one-third of the station's intelligence output came from the paramilitary activities CIA had relinquished. The DCI believed it was more important than ever to have an aggressive collection effort in the South, but SWITCHBACK had closed one of the Agency's most productive avenues. If US military officials wanted CIA to increase tactical field reporting, McCone argued, then the Pentagon ought to pay the Agency to conduct the paramilitary operations that made much of that collection possible.³⁸ ~~✗~~

McCone had little confidence that MACV could handle the CIA projects it inherited nearly as well as the Agency had. He wrote to McNamara in May 1964 that MACV seemed unable to do "a few very essential things on a 'quick-and-dirty' basis"—training and equipping a few border crossing teams on short notice, for example. "[A] very professional, well-run operation developed by CIA over a period of several years...had been completely liquidated and lost as a result of Operation SWITCHBACK," he told McGeorge Bundy in June 1964. "CIA had predicted this, [and] they regretted it." Still, largely because he believed the war was going badly and being badly run, McCone did not try to recover the Agency's lost paramilitary roles. When Bundy asked him in mid-1964 to consider reengaging the Agency operationally in Vietnam at a pre-SWITCHBACK level, he declined. Unless the process was "enthusiastically endorsed" by the White House and the Pentagon, a "frightening interdepartmental quarrel" would erupt, and by then he had no stomach for another of those.³⁹ ~~✗~~

The Coup Manqué Against Diem (U)

NIE 53-63 may have reinforced the optimism of some administration officials, but the deterioration and disarray in Saigon and elsewhere in the South shook the confidence of other policymakers in President Diem. The intensity of

the revived non-communist resistance to Ngo rule—especially the self-immolations of Buddhist monks—startled the administration. "How could this have happened?" the president asked. "Who are these people? Why didn't we know about them before?"⁴⁰ Compounding the political problem, in recent months the situations on the battlefields of Vietnam had either stopped improving or turned worse. Convinced the Ngo regime must be replaced if South



Ngo Dinh Diem and US military adviser (U)

Vietnam was to survive, a coterie of US government decisionmakers encouraged a junta of ARVN military coup plotters. Their support of a coup embroiled McCone in the most contentious Vietnam-related controversy of his directorship. (U)

McCone consistently held to the "better the devil we know" viewpoint regarding Diem and was slow to join administration efforts to press him to reform. The DCI opposed Diem's replacement, arguing that no plausible alternatives existed and that a protracted period of chaos would likely follow his ouster and open the way to a takeover by proxies of Moscow and Beijing. During McCone's trip to Vietnam in mid-1962, he met Diem, was impressed by his leadership qualities, and resolved that the United States should stand behind him. The DCI recognized the inadequacies of the Ngo government, but those shortcomings were not touchstones in his thinking. He is not on record expressing personal opinions about the regime's more extreme measures, such as the massive raids on Buddhist pagodas in Hue and Saigon on 21 August 1963. Possibly, he held Diem's brother Nhu responsible for the regime's more reprehensible actions and feared that its opponents would construe concessions as a sign of weakness and only intensify their demonstrations. Undercutting Diem for his harsh and clumsy handling of internal affairs, the DCI believed, would distract Saigon and Washington from the main prob-

³⁸ "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 17 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 2 October 1963. ~~✗~~

³⁹ McCone letter to McNamara, 7 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 7, folder 7; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Executive Committee with the President...", 6 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11. ~~✗~~

⁴⁰ Rust, 102. (U)

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lem, the communist insurgency. McCone also would have noted that his senior operations officers on Vietnam, William Colby and John Richardson, supported Diem's staying in power, while the main American critics of the Saigon government were upstart journalists and high-ranking Department of State officials whose opinions McCone had not valued highly.⁴¹ (U)

McCone regularly made his case for Diem in SGC meetings. His references to the "oriental mind" irritated Hilsman and Harriman—the purported experts on such matters—who rejoined that McCone was asking the wrong question. To them, the issue was not who could replace Diem, but whether the United States could win with him. Even that query missed the point, however. Its salient flaw—also present in McCone's thinking—was that it did not consider the possibility that Vietnam could not be stabilized with or without Diem, regardless of what the United States did. The stepped-up CIA covert actions and heavy US airstrikes that McCone argued for the following year would have made little difference in saving the Ngos. (U)

McCone was out of town during the weekend of 23–24 August 1963—the peak of the capital's vacation season—when Hilsman, Harriman, and Forrestal, with George Ball's concurrence, tried to circumvent the SGC and engineer Diem's downfall through back-channel contacts with the ARVN conspirators. On Saturday, Hilsman drafted a cable to Lodge in Saigon that in effect authorized a coup. The Country Team "should urgently examine all possible alternative leadership and make detailed plans as to how we might bring about Diem's replacement if this should become necessary." Lodge was instructed to tell the dissident commanders that the administration would "give them

direct support in any interim period of breakdown in [the] central government mechanism." Hilsman and his associates cleared the text by telephone with the president (in Hyannis Port) and then informed other officials of "Higher Authority's" concurrence. Neither McCone—vacationing in California—nor DDCI Carter could be reached; the first senior CIA executive to be contacted (by Harriman) was Richard Helms, the duty officer that day. Helms then discussed the telegram with Colby and Carter. They decided to take no immediate action but to await a response from Lodge. Helms later said the cable was not coordinated with CIA in any meaningful way. "This was just sort of tipping their hat to the Agency, that they'd called everybody."⁴² ~~XX~~

McCone first heard about the communication in detail on Sunday, when, at his request, Colby flew out to brief him. "[H]e was furious," Colby recalled; "as always, outwardly calm, but his calm was now exceptionally icy." Nonetheless, McCone acted with uncharacteristic passivity throughout the episode. Despite the obvious miscues in Washington, he did not cut short his trip. He kept informed through daily telephone briefings from Headquarters, and he apparently only contacted Bundy to argue against US support for a coup. Perhaps he thought it best to remain uninvolved, to distance himself and the Agency from a likely fiasco—a questionable calculation, considering that two CIA officers in Saigon were dealing closely with the ARVN dissidents. Acting DCI Carter, who attended NSC meetings with Helms and Colby in McCone's place during the last week of August, later said the DCI's absence was unhelpful. He recalled urging McCone to return to Washington promptly because Lodge was interpreting the cable as a directive, not merely as an advisory (as Bundy termed it). According to Carter, McCone listened only to Bundy and

⁴¹ Illustrative of the Agency's Vietnam "knowledge base" on which McCone drew are two memoranda to him from Colby: "Vietnam" and "Leadership in Vietnam—Ngo Dinh Nhu," both dated 31 August 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 10. Colby characterized the perception that Diem was a "Mandarin dictator" as "superficial," and, after toring up Nhu's assets and liabilities, assessed him as "a strong, reasonably well oriented and efficient potential successor...a desirable rather than a catastrophic candidate in the search for dynamic leadership in Vietnam. Few others offer as favorable a list of some of the critical assets necessary to Vietnam's situation." ~~XX~~

McNamara, Taylor, Harkins, and Vice President Johnson shared McCone's doubts about replacing Diem. The Agency's most vocal exponents of a change in leadership were junior operations officers in Vietnam—mainly those in contact with opposition elements and liaison representatives frustrated by the influence Nhu had over the local services. Karnow, 287–89; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 207–8; McCone ~~XX~~ OH, 15. (U)

⁴² DEPTTEL 243 to Embassy Saigon, 24 August 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, III, *Vietnam, January–August 1963*, 628–29; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record... 'Phone Conversation with Governor Averell Harriman," 26 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 253–55 ~~XX~~

Accounts differ on the extent to which CIA "coordinated" on the controversial telegram. According to Thomas Powers (*The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 163–64) Helms concurred with the import of the cable, rather than merely acknowledging that he had been informed of it, by saying, "It's about time we bit this bullet." The DDP's supposed statement does not appear in any official record. Roger Hilsman (*To Move a Nation*, 488) has claimed that "the Acting Director of CIA [Carter] also went over the draft, and he too decided to approve without disturbing his chief's vacation—adding the comment that the time had clearly come to take a stand." Agency records indicate that no one tried to reach Carter on the 24th, and that he was not involved until after the cable had been sent. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 590; Carter memorandum to Helms, "False Allegation in the Book, *To Move a Nation*..." 1 December 1967, and ~~XX~~ (OIG) memorandum, "General Carter's Memorandum to the DCI...Concerning the 24 August 1963 Cable to Ambassador Lodge," OIG Files, J00 74500779K, box 1, folder 2; "CIA OIG Report on Vietnam," 4, 5; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 8; transcript of McCone interview with Marguerite Higgins (*New York Herald Tribune*), 9 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11. ~~XX~~

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by his disengagement missed an opportunity to prevent the involvement of the Agency in the coup plotting. McCone later had to deflect attempts to link CIA with the so-called "green light" message. When Harriman asked why responsible Agency officers had not conveyed their views when the cable was sent, McCone replied that Helms had merely been "informed" of its general content and that no administration official had tried to coordinate it with the Agency.⁴³ ~~XX~~

The question of who knew what and when soon became moot. After another week of fumbling and indecision in Washington and Saigon—"[a]uthorities are now having second thoughts," Maxwell Taylor wrote—the commanders' conspiracy ended. "Generals did not feel ready and did not have sufficient balance of forces," the station reported on 31 August. "This particular coup is finished.... We did our best and got licked." McCone was left with another image-perception problem to manage when he returned to Washington on 2 September. In Saigon and in the regional and American press, CIA was being blamed for trying to subvert the Diem regime. The DCI faced a critical audience when he discussed the coup plotting with PFIAB later in the month. Chairman Clifford later claimed that McCone was guilty either of mismanagement or deception when he told the members that CIA had been in touch with senior ARVN officers but had not encouraged them. Clifford recalled that he did not know if McCone was misleading the board or was inadequately informed about CIA activities in Saigon—neither explanation reflecting well on McCone and the Agency.⁴⁴ ~~XX~~

During September and October, McCone attended more than three dozen meetings on Vietnam at Headquarters and downtown—more than on any other issue at the time. He

found the extended White House discussions on Vietnam after the *coup manqué* to be confusing and disorganized. The president's indecision was hard to interpret: Was he pro- or anti-Diem by default? Was he pursuing, however haphazardly, a consensus by letting subordinates resolve their quarrels themselves or by waiting until one faction prevailed? Or was he truly uncertain about what to do? A 10 September meeting of the NSC, at which Gen. Krulak and Department of State official John Mendenhall gave diametrically opposed evaluations of the state of play in the South, signaled to McCone that, after all the talk and debate, fundamental questions were still unaddressed: Will Diem remain in power whether he reforms or not? Does a feasible alternative leadership group exist? Can a refurbished Diem regime still win the war? Will Diem and Nhu make a deal with Ho Chi Minh? To help him better evaluate the rising volume of information about Vietnam, sort out the various operational and policy options, and advise the president more cogently, McCone established a Vietnam Working Group inside CIA. Its principal members were Chester Cooper of ONE, the chairman; R. Jack Smith, the director of OCI; and Sherman Kent and William Colby. The DCI got the group busy on several assessments and said he did not want to attend another NSC meeting on Vietnam until he had studied those papers and discussed them with his deputies. McCone also dispatched Huntington Sheldon, the ADDI, to Saigon to provide a first-hand field assessment and had him answer questions from the NSC after he returned.⁴⁵ ~~XX~~

Chastened by the NIE 53-63 affair, McCone from here on out generally accepted the judgments of his "best minds" on Vietnam. He agreed that disaffection toward the Ngos in Vietnam was making victory over the Viet Cong "doubtful

⁴³ Bromley Smith (NSC), "Memorandum of a Conference with the President...August 29, 1963..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 31; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 263, and "McCone as DCI (1973)," 626; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 210, and *Lost Victory*, 138; Colby memorandum to Elder, "Vietnam," 31 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 1; Carter/McAuliffe OH, 12-13; "Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting at the White House...August 26, 1963..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, III, Vietnam, January-August 1963*, 638-41; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman..." 31 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8. Headquarters sent a cable to Saigon station on 25 August that conveyed McCone's reservations about replacing Diem (it is not known if the DCI had a hand in drafting its language): "In circumstance believe CIA must fully accept directives of policy makers and seek ways accomplish objectives they seek," although the Department of State's action "appears [to] be throwing away bird in hand before we have adequately identified birds in bush, or songs they may sing." Quoted in Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 32. Contrary to most secondary accounts, McCone did not attend the NSC meeting on Monday the 26th at which the president asked those present to endorse the coup idea or propose an alternative. ~~XX~~

⁴⁴ "The Demise of the House of Ngo," in *Central Intelligence: Fifty Years of the CIA*, 182-89; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chap. 12; "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 3-13; Taylor telegram to Harkins, JCS 3368-63, 28 August 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, III, Vietnam, January-August 1963*, 675; Saigon station telegrams to Headquarters, 31 August and 2 September 1963, *ibid.*, *IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 64, 92; Clifford, 405. Much of the anti-CIA press coverage originated in the *Times of Vietnam*, run by Ngo Dinh Nhu. John Mecklin, *Mission in Torment*, 201-3. ~~XX~~

⁴⁵ McCone calendars, entries for September and October 1963; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 271; McCone untitled memorandum, 13 September 1963, attached to Harold P. Ford memorandum to McCone, "Basic Questions Concerning South Vietnam," same date, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Krulak's and Mendenhall's reports and NSC discussion of them in *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 153-67, 243-49; McCone memorandum summarizing Sheldon's reporting cable, 13 September 1963, *ibid.*, 206-7; Krulak memorandum of NSC meeting at Department of State, 16 September 1963, *ibid.*, 218-19. President Kennedy at this time reactivated the NSC Executive Committee to deal with Vietnam in the same way that it functioned during the Cuban missile crisis. USIB memorandum USIB-M-287, 11 September 1963, ICS Files, Job 82500096R, box 2, folder 2. As he often did, McCone briefed Gen. Eisenhower in Gettysburg in mid-September, at the president's request. Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 663-67. ~~XX~~

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if not impossible" and that the preferred solution was to pressure Diem to institute reforms and change personnel. The United States should not go as far as cutting off military and economic aid—doing so would only encourage Diem and Nhu to make a bargain with Ho and hasten a communist takeover—nor should it encourage any more coup plots. McCone concurred with the assessment of the previous US ambassador to South Vietnam, Frederick Nolting, that Diem was "the only guy that has got the guts and the vision and the respect of sufficient people to hold this country together." If the United States would surely lose without Diem, it must try harder not to lose with him. One approach, McCone suggested at a White House meeting in mid-September, might be to persuade Diem's much-despised brother to step down—particularly after various sources reported that Nhu might be making a secret, separate arrangement with Hanoi. The DCI also raised numerous intermediate steps the administration might try to get Diem to take, such as shuffling the cabinet, ending martial law, taking the infamous Vietnam Special Forces away from Nhu, and reaching a settlement with the Buddhists. The disputes inside the administration continued, but agreement gradually emerged on taking a harder line against Diem—a policy referred to as "selective pressure."⁴⁶

The DCI Versus the Ambassador (U)

While the policymakers wrangled, the analysts assessed, and the generals conspired, McCone fought the efforts of the new ambassador, Henry Cabot Lodge, to control CIA activities in Vietnam and to use the Agency to help push Diem out. The assertive and arrogant Lodge arrived in Saigon at a time of maximum confusion in the Kennedy administration and of severe peril to the Diem government. With Nolting's tour in Saigon due to end in mid-August, the administration had looked to replace him with, in Hilsman's words, "a civilian public figure whose character and reputation would permit him to dominate the representatives of all other departments and agencies."⁴⁷ Lodge came to mind. He fit the



Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge with President Diem (U)

mold of many Kennedy appointments from senior GOP ranks. A Massachusetts brahmin, he had a lengthy Eastern establishment résumé that included three terms in the Senate and seven years as the Eisenhower administration's ambassador to the United Nations. He spoke fluent French and had a dignified demeanor and a strong, often overbearing, personality that commanded deference. Lodge got to Saigon two days before the Hilsman-Harriman-Forrestal cable went out and eagerly set about implementing the prescription of the moment—barring drastic change, the Ngos must go, the sooner the better. He would brook no resistance from McCone and CIA. (U)

Lodge largely blamed Saigon station for the failure of the August 1963 coup plot and believed the Agency had obstructed it because it feared upsetting a long and close relationship with Diem and Nhu. He claimed Agency officers were too visible and had too much autonomy, had been ineffective in penetrating the government and the opposition, and were reluctant to cooperate with the US military. Accordingly, he moved to exert full sway over all station operations. From Langley's perspective, the ambassador was going to run what Colby later called "very much a vest-pocket operation and not a country team or total American

⁴⁶ Transcript of McCone-Nolting meeting, 4 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 5; McCone memorandum, "Situation in South Vietnam," 10 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 2; Lawrence R. Houston (General Counsel), "Memorandum for the Record...DCI and John Richardson Appearance before Far East and the Pacific Subcommittee, House Foreign Affairs [Committee], 23 October 1963," *ibid.*, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion, Secretary Rusk's Conference Room...16 September 1963," *ibid.*, box 6, folder 5; Colby memorandum, "Presidential Meeting on Vietnam, 11 September 1963," and McCone untitled memorandum, 13 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 2; memoranda of White House meetings on 11 and 12 September 1963, "Editorial Note," memorandum of McCone-Harriman telephone conversation on 13 September 1963, and CIA memorandum for McCone, "Possible Rapprochement Between North and South Vietnam," 26 September 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 190-93, 200-202, 204, 295-98; George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam*, 168-69.

⁴⁷ Nolting's perspective—that "our failure in Vietnam was the result of political, not military, mistakes" that began during the Kennedy administration—can be found in his memoir, *From Trust to Tragedy*.

⁴⁷ Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 478. Lodge's own brief and unenlightening version of these events appears in his memoir, *The Storm Has Many Eyes*, 205-12. (U)

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effort," and would tolerate only officials who could "operate on a tactical level rather than as coworkers in the strategic vineyard."⁴⁸ ~~✗~~

One of Lodge's first moves in that direction was to replace COS John Richardson. He did not get along with Richardson and believed Richardson's removal would send a signal to the disgruntled ARVN generals that the US government would not stand in the way of a coup. Lodge also wanted Richardson out because he thought the



impaired his ability to negotiate with Diem. Lodge later told McCone that he had lost confidence in Richardson because the COS "had led him up the hill and then back down" during the August plot by providing contradictory forecasts of its prospects. The ambassador believed that Edward Lansdale, who had helped Diem consolidate his leadership in the mid-1950s, could better handle the changes taking place in South Vietnam. Lansdale, then a major general serving as an assistant to the secretary of defense, would, in Lodge's words, "be a sort of 'Lawrence of Arabia' to take charge under my supervision of all US relationships with the change of government here."⁴⁹ ~~✗~~

Lodge connived to have Richardson withdrawn by belittling his performance and reputation in unattributed comments to the press. In September 1963, McCone heard from Helms that Lodge's military assistant, Lt. Col. Michael Dunn, had let station officers know that Lodge "was going to get rid of Richardson." McNamara told McCone in October that Lodge's aides "were doing their utmost to destroy Richardson and...would leave no stone unturned" in their effort. The

press reports at issue accused Saigon station of incompetence, arrogance, and disobedience. In the words of one story, it had committed "incredible and garish blunders" that produced a "wretched muddle" in Vietnam, demonstrating "the folly and the danger of allowing the CIA to be a primary force in the development of American policy."⁵⁰ ~~✗~~

When McCone heard about the ambassador's actions—especially the embassy's derogatory leaks about the Agency to American journalists in Saigon—he became, as he put it, "possessed of a cold anger." His reaction shows how he could be a gloves-off bureaucratic infighter when he thought it necessary to protect CIA, his subordinates, and himself. In this instance, he feared that Lodge would ensnare the Agency in a failed covert action as harmful to its reputation as was the Bay of Pigs operation. The ambassador, McCone believed, was one of the "advocates of action to move precipitously without coordination and without intelligence support"—that is, he wanted a coup—and, frustrated at CIA reports that conditions did not exist for securing stability after a regime change, he was "now carrying on a campaign" against Saigon station. The DCI suspected that a substantial portion of the "obviously planted" press attacks came from Harriman, "who is both emotional and talkative," and that others originated with Lodge and his staff. They would, McCone suggested, hold background briefings and drop enough leads for "smart correspondents like [David] Halberstam [of the *New York Times*] to find no difficulty in full development of a specific story." To the DCI, it was no coincidence that before Lodge's arrival, CIA's presence in Vietnam received little attention in the press, but that afterward critical coverage of the Agency appeared frequently (by CIA's count, 125 articles from 23 August to 17 September). In early October, McCone asked Frank Wisner, the retired former DDP, then serving as an Agency consultant, to track down the source of the leaks. Wisner's investigation indicated that Lodge, Hilsman, and Harriman were "among the upper echelon of detractors and suppliers of hostile and misleading informa-

⁴⁸ Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Discussion with Kenneth Hansen of the Bureau of the Budget on the Situation in Saigon at the Time of His Visit," 24 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Colby cable from Saigon station to Headquarters, 16 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, IV, *Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 602. ~~✗~~

⁴⁹ Lodge letter to Rusk, 13 September 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, IV, *Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 205; Rust, 149; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Anne Blair, *Lodge in Vietnam: A Patriot Abroad*, 87–88; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, 282–85, 294–97; Mecklin, 225–26. When Lansdale heard of Lodge's appointment, he arranged to brief the ambassador-designate on Vietnam affairs. Currey, 253. ~~✗~~

⁵⁰ Karamessines untitled memorandum to Helms, 4 October 1963, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 2; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Walker Stone (journalist), 16 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 281; Elder memorandum, "Press Reporting on Vietnam and CIA," 23 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2. ~~✗~~

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tion to the press"—including material about CIA operations and personnel.⁵¹ ~~X~~

Privately, to the president, McCone criticized Lodge's performance in the same harsh terms the embassy was using against Richardson. The DCI noted that while at the United Nations, Lodge "was inclined to make policy rather than follow instructions...to be reckless in his criticism of Washington in his discussions with representatives of other foreign countries...[and had] an amazing desire for nearness and closeness to the press." The ambassador's "complete lack of consciousness of security" made it unwise to inform him of covert operations. Until this dispute was resolved, to protect CIA equities, McCone ordered Agency officers not to discuss sensitive matters with the ambassador. "Lodge has no concept of security and has long used the press as an instrument of power," he cautioned his deputies. Moreover, from an operational standpoint, McCone argued that giving the embassy authority over CIA's clandestine contacts would impair its ability to collect the intelligence Lodge and administration policymakers needed. With press reports circulating that the Agency had backed the August coup plot, McCone did not want the station swept up in Lodge's maneuvering, which might scare away sources. Finally, McCone told Lodge and the NSC that Lansdale "could not fit into Saigon Station" because, owing to Operation MON-
GOOSE, Agency officers had no confidence in him.⁵³ ~~X~~

⁵¹ McCone memorandum, "CIA activities in South Viet Nam," 26 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record... Discussion...16 September 1963," and untitled memorandum dated 17 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 5; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Meeting with [redacted] 26 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 8; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963), and [redacted] memorandum to Carter, "Report of Origins and Underlying Motivation of Anti-CIA Campaign in re Vietnamese Situation," 17 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342; Richardson memorandum to McCone, "Saigon Station Relationships with the Press," c. early October 1963, and Cooper memorandum to McCone, "Press Criticism of the CIA Role in Vietnam," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 676. ~~X~~

Soon after the coup against Diem in November, President Kennedy confidentially recorded his thoughts about the McCone-Lodge relationship. The DCI opposed a coup "partly because of an old hostility to Lodge which causes him to lack confidence and mars his judgment, [and] partly as a result of a new hostility because Lodge shifted his station chief..." John F. Kennedy dictabelt recordings, Belt 17, 4 November 1963, 55 of transcript, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 9. (U)

In a private letter to McCone, Lodge minimized the importance of the negative press coverage about CIA: "These things come and go and are soon forgotten. They are an unavoidable part of democratic government." He also denied knowing who had leaked information to journalists: "[T]his kind of talk is very common here.... [T]here are thousands of Americans in Saigon, many of whom are highly loquacious, and it is no more possible to track down a newspaperman's source here, assuming that he has a source, than it is in the US." Lodge letter to McCone, 3 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3. ~~X~~

⁵³ Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Executive Committee Meeting on Vietnam, 16 September 1963," and Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with [redacted] Saigon," 17 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Private Meeting with the President..., 5 October 1963," "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President...8 October [1963]" with attachments, and untitled memorandum dated 17 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 5; Knoche, "Memorandum for the Record: Meeting in DCI's Office...7 October 1963," *ibid.*, box 3, folder 3; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Conversation with [redacted] Saigon," 17 September 1963, and McCone letter to Lodge, 19 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 1; Lodge letter to McCone, 30 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277; Ahern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, 294-97; memorandum of McCone-Rusk telephone conversation, 17 September 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 240-41. ~~X~~

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McCone could not prevent Richardson's removal, but he succeeded in scotching Lansdale's nomination. The NSC principals agreed that dispatching a new COS with known sympathies for Diem at the same time Washington was pushing the South Vietnamese government to reform would be counterproductive. The DCI, however, lost the larger bureaucratic skirmish with Lodge. McGeorge Bundy agreed with McCone that, in general, ambassadors should not have the power to restrict CIA's operational contacts. He was well aware, though, that McCone really was insisting on the Agency's right to maintain its ties to [redacted] which Lodge would not countenance. Noting that the Saigon situation was especially delicate, Bundy remarked that the station should limit itself to contacts the ambassador approved. As Colby later observed, "the Kennedy team could not gainsay him [Lodge]—and did not particularly want to. The CIA was a tool easily used to pass a message; it would follow orders." At the same time, Secretary Rusk cautioned Lodge "not to open this next stage [of policy implementation] in the press."⁵⁴ ~~✗~~

McCone then tried a time-tested bureaucratic tactic: administrative reorganization. First, he floated the idea of pulling out the entire station and putting in a few select officers to conduct espionage and counterintelligence operations, and, under new covers, to reestablish contact with the Ngo brothers. Colby and Helms's deputy, Thomas Karamessines, told him that such an action would be "senseless" and "smack of petulance," but McCone went ahead. He told Bundy that because the Agency's activities in Saigon were too well known to too many people, he planned to make some fundamental changes in the station and turn over to other agencies all overt activities not specifically related to CIA's clandestine mission. [redacted]

McCone passed his restructuring plans along to McNamara before the latter left for a trip to Saigon. [redacted]

[redacted] Colby accompanied McNamara on this fact finding tour, but Lodge prohibited the FE Division chief from having any dealings with the Presidential Palace. [redacted]

[redacted] McCone agreed, but when he proposed sending Colby to Saigon as acting COS to reorganize the station, he met with strong opposition from Bundy, [redacted]

[redacted] McCone recorded that he told Bundy and the rest of the Special Group:

The policy we had been following for the last 60 days was characterized by a complete lack of substantive intelligence on the regime. This[,] I said[,] worried me very much and I felt it spelled absolute disaster for the United States. I said that to me this was both incredible and exceedingly dangerous for us to go forward with military and other commitments of the proportions of our South Viet Nam effort without knowing everything we could possibly find out as to the thinking of the regime we were dealing with. The hiatus created by Lodge's policy foreclosed all of this[,] and I thought it was absolutely wrong and would spell disaster.

Bundy retorted that McCone actually was describing not an intelligence problem but a matter of policy, and that he was exceeding his authority as DCI. Although that might appear so, McCone said, it was not true because Lodge had "foreclosed intelligence sources" needed to support the American effort in Vietnam.⁵⁶ ~~✗~~

⁵⁴ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 276–77; Colby, *Lost Victory*, 149; DEPTTEL 533 to Embassy Saigon, 5 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 371. When Lodge was reposted to Saigon as ambassador in 1965, he took Lansdale with him to run the pacification programs. Currey, 292ff. ~~✗~~

⁵⁵ Karamessines untitled memorandum to Helms, 4 October 1963, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 2; McCone memorandum, "CIA activities in South Viet Nam," 26 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 2; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277. ~~✗~~

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After that confrontation, McCone met privately with Bundy and once again emphasized his concern over the administration's course in South Vietnam. If Bundy replied, it went unrecorded. In the meantime, McCone recalled Richardson for consultations instead of formally withdrawing him, although few officials thought the COS would ever return. Until the administration decided to work for Diem's ouster, the DCI believed, it should stand by Richardson—"the one man who has been level-headed and whose feet are on the ground.... Rather than replacing him...we need him now more than ever."⁵⁷ ~~SECRET~~

McCone took his apprehensions about Saigon station affairs to the president on 21 October. After reviewing a discussion with Rep. Clement J. Zablocki (D-WI), who had invited both the DCI and Richardson to appear before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Far East subcommittee, McCone told the president that he was very worried over the loss of useful intelligence from South Vietnam during the past two months. Because Lodge had banned either covert or overt contact with Diem and Nhu and other top South Vietnamese officials, the quality and importance of Agency reporting had declined so far that, McCone said, he was very worried about the possibility of a significant intelligence failure. Agreeing that the situation was serious if true, President Kennedy nevertheless seemed more concerned that McCone was meeting with Zablocki—like the DCI, a Diem supporter. The president encouraged McCone to do what he could to keep the report that Zablocki's subcommittee would soon release from sounding like a congressional endorsement of the Saigon government. McCone said he would try. On the 23rd, however, he and Richardson told the subcommittee that on balance a coup would harm US interests.⁵⁸ ~~SECRET~~

Two days later, at a meeting with McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Robert Kennedy, the president said he wanted unanimity within his administration on South Vietnam and remarked that he felt the DCI was out of step with policy. What, he asked, were McCone's views? In response, McCone recounted at length the position he had already taken with the president in private, highlighting his concern over a policy that prevented all contact with Diem and Nhu and thus shut off any intelligence from that area. Observing that the US government was at a crossroads in Vietnam, McCone said that affairs there were being handled unprofessionally and recommended working with the Ngos rather than trying to remove them—an event whose only certain outcome would be political confusion that would benefit the communists. He still believed that, in spite of all its problems, the Diem government could prevail with US help. The DCI could not foresee that he and the administration would have to concern himself with the Ngo brothers for only another week.⁵⁹ ~~SECRET~~

The Death of Diem (U)

The denouement of the Diem government began during the first week of October 1963.⁶⁰ On the second, Robert McNamara and Maxwell Taylor reported on their inspection tour of South Vietnam the month before. While defending US policy overall, they recommended using "selective pressures" on Diem to get him to remove Nhu, end repression of the Buddhists, and energize the counterinsurgency against the communists. To show the South Vietnamese president that the administration meant business, the report recommended withdrawing 1,000 American troops by year's end and withholding some economic aid.

⁵⁶ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 277–78; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—17 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 5; "Reorganization and Reduction of CIA's Station in Saigon," 6 October 1963, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 3. ~~SECRET~~

After the 17 October meeting of the SGC, Roger Hilsman's special assistant accurately described the DCI's thinking at that time:

McCone expressed at some length and reportedly with considerable vigor...the view that we are going to have "an explosion" in Vietnam in the very near future. I am not sure precisely what McCone had in mind, but I imagine that he was asserting for the record one of his familiar "visceral" feelings. These, as we know, are sometimes right (Soviet missiles in Cuba) and sometimes wrong (ChiCom major attack on India)... McCone may be arguing that the cumulative effect of political-economic unease will bring things to a head in much shorter order.... [H]e may think that the development of an explosive situation is unlikely to redound to our benefit, that an alternative government acceptable and useful to us is unlikely to arise, and that the communist Viet Cong is in the best position to exploit the chaos that could ensue.

"Memorandum from the Special Assistant in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Neubert) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Hilsman)," 18 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 406–7. (U)

⁵⁷ McCone, "DCI Talking Paper," 2 October 1963, and "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group 5412 Meeting—17 October 1963," and Knoche, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in DCI's Office," 7 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3. ~~SECRET~~

⁵⁸ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President—October 21," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 718–20. Zablocki had just returned from a two-week tour of Southeast Asia—about one-fourth of it spent in South Vietnam—with a delegation from the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The group's conclusions, published in early November, largely paralleled McCone's views. *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 378 n. 8, 446–47. ~~SECRET~~

⁵⁹ McCone, "Meeting with the President," 25 October 1963, McCone Papers, folder 5, box 6; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 720–25. ~~SECRET~~

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McNamara and Taylor further noted that despite serious political tensions inside the leadership in Saigon, there was no indication that a coup would succeed.⁶¹ (U)

CIA did not agree with the report's prognosis. McCone told the NSC ExComm that although the report corroborated Agency information and analyses that progress was being made in the war, achievements were not as great and the outlook was not as favorable as McNamara and Taylor believed. Moreover, the report understated how much the political situation in the South would affect the war effort. Finally, the DCI advised that cutting back on commodity shipments to exert pressure on the Saigon government would more likely cause an economic crisis than force Diem and Nhu to institute reforms.⁶² ~~(S)~~

President Kennedy nonetheless approved the recommendation to suspend some US economic and military aid—notably, in the latter category, assistance to Nhu's Special Forces. As a cable of instructions to Lodge stated, "Actions are designed to indicate to Diem government our displeasure at its political policies and activities and to create significant uncertainty in that government and in key Vietnamese groups as to future intentions of United States." The tone of Washington-Saigon relations was to continue to be one of "cool correctness." McCone's CIA working group judged that those instructions had some good features but "reflect[ed] a continuing Washington inability to face up to certain key decisions."⁶³ (U)

On the covert side, directives from Washington were ambiguous and produced confusion and regrettable consequences. President Kennedy cautioned Lodge against actively encouraging coup initiatives, but he told the ambassador to identify and develop contacts with alternative leaders in Saigon in a "totally secure and fully deniable" fashion. As conveyed to the station, this guidance meant that, if approached, CIA officers could elicit information from dissident ARVN generals about their plots and assure them that the US government would not stand in the way of a change in leadership, but that the Agency would not advise on or participate in any coup attempts or pre-endorse any specific leader. As of late October, when a putsch seemed imminent, Lodge reported to Washington that "[w]e are not engineering the coup. The sum total of our relationship thus far is: that we will not thwart a coup; that we will monitor and report." Given the events of the preceding August, however, the generals found it hard not to interpret CIA's dealings with them, which intensified throughout the month, as implicit approval of their schemes.⁶⁴ (U)

Station contacts with the ARVN conspirators reached a new level of sensitivity when reports circulated that they planned to assassinate some of the Ngos. McCone—personally averse to the idea of lethal "executive action," and having learned just recently of the Agency's collaboration with the Mafia in trying to kill Fidel Castro—immediately squelched the idea, at least insofar as CIA could be linked to such activity. He ordered Colby to tell Saigon station to

⁶⁰ Details about Diem's last weeks in power are best recounted in Abern, *CIA and the House of Ngo*, chaps. 13–14; ~~(S)~~

Howard Jones, *Death of a Generation*, chaps. 16–17; Francis X. Winters, *The Year of the Fire*, chaps. 6–8; Euen J. Hammer, *A Death in November*, chaps. 9–10; Robert Shaplen, *The Lost Revolution*, 201–12; Karnow, 295–311; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, chap. 33; Kahin, 170–81; David Halberstam, *The Making of a Quagmire*, chap. 12; Geoffrey Warner, "The United States and the Fall of Diem, Part II: The Death of Diem," *Australian Outlook* 28, no. 4 (April 1975): 3–17; B. Hugh Tovar, "Vietnam Revisited," *IJIC* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 291–312; and Marguerite Higgins, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*. ~~(S)~~

⁶¹ "Report of McNamara-Taylor Mission to South Vietnam," 2 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 336–46; Shapley, 259–62; Robert S. McNamara with Brian Van de Mark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 73–81; Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars*, 386–90. (U)

⁶² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting this morning—NSC," 5 October 1963, CIA South Vietnam Working Group memorandum, "Comment on...the McNamara-Taylor Report," 4 October 1963, and "Report to the Executive Committee," 3 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 3; Forrestal memorandum, "Presidential Conference on South Vietnam," 5 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 368. ~~(S)~~

⁶³ "Summary Record of the 519th Meeting of the National Security Council...October 2, 1963..." "Memorandum of a Meeting, White House Situation Room...October 3, 1963..." Krulak memorandum on "Meeting of the Executive Committee...October 4, 1963..." with annex, Forrestal memorandum on "Presidential Conference on South Vietnam," 5 October 1963, DEPTTEL 534 to Embassy Saigon, 5 October 1963, and NSAM No. 263, "South Vietnam," 11 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 350–52, 356–64, 368–79, 395–96. (U)

⁶⁴ Bundy telegram to Lodge, CAP 63550, 5 October 1963, Bundy telegram to Embassy Saigon, DIR 74228, 9 October 1963, and Lodge telegram to Department of State, 29 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 379, 393, 454; Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 186. Bundy's words to Lodge were:

While we do not wish to stimulate coup, we also do not wish to leave impression that U.S. would thwart a change of government or deny economic and military assistance to a new regime if it appeared capable of increasing effectiveness of military effort, ensuring popular support to win war and improving working relations with U.S. We would like to be informed on what is being contemplated but we should avoid being drawn into reviewing or advising on operational plans or any other act which might tend to identify U.S. too closely with change in government. We would, however, welcome information which would help us assess character of any alternate leadership.

"Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 427. (U)

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withdraw from Lodge its recommendation of three alternative coup plans the dissident generals had devised, one of which called for assassinating Diem's brothers. At McCone's direction, Colby told the station that "[w]e cannot be in the position of stimulating, approving, or supporting assassination"; "we cannot be in [a] position [of] actively condoning such [a] course of action and thereby engaging our responsibility therefor." He added, however, that "we are in no way responsible for stopping every threat of which we might receive even partial knowledge." McCone rejected a station suggestion that acting COS [] be part of a troika (along with Gen. Harkins and embassy official William Trueheart) that would direct a coup operation. That was a policymaking function inappropriate for an Agency officer, he averred. []

contact that McCone did not approve of but could do little about because Lodge was in charge—the DCI could truthfully say that American decisions about the coup were made in the White House, not at Langley, and that the embassy, not the station, directed all of the Agency's peripheral involvement in Diem's ouster.⁶⁵ ~~X~~

In trying to distance CIA from the generals' plotting, McCone did not seem to appreciate the ironic situation in which the Agency and the US government would soon find themselves. Just because the administration expressed its disapproval of assassination did not mean that the generals would not attempt one; and by trying to maintain plausible deniability of involvement in events in Saigon, Washington relinquished much of its ability to influence what happened there—including, as it turned out, the murders of Diem and Nhu. As the DCI told Harriman on the eve of Diem's overthrow, the administration had to decide finally whether to back Diem or "put our shoulder behind the coup." Unless it took sides, the United States risked losing any credit if the situation in Vietnam improved and taking much of the blame if it did not. The administration, however, had boxed itself in, according to McCone; "the failure of a coup would be a disaster, and a successful coup would have a harmful

effect on the war effort." Moreover, the United States had involved itself deeply enough with the plotters that it would be held at least partly responsible for whatever happened, yet it could not assure that the outcome would be an improvement. McCone's own view remained clear: back Diem. Testifying to the Church Committee in 1975, he said: "My precise words to the President, and I remember them very clearly, was [sic] that, 'Mr. President, if I was manager of a baseball team, [and] I had one pitcher, I'd keep him in the box whether he was a good pitcher or not.'" Even if the United States could trust the dissident generals—and McCone raised the possibility, with which McNamara agreed, that one of them might be under Nhu's control—their seizure of power would usher in an extended period of political unrest.⁶⁶ ~~X~~

The coup—like "a stone rolling downhill," as Lodge put it—took place on 1 November, just after midnight Washington time. At a meeting with the president and his principal Vietnam advisers that morning, McCone suggested the administration tell the coup leaders that recognition of their new government would follow more quickly if they installed the South Vietnamese vice president as Diem's successor, thereby establishing a semblance of constitutional legitimacy. Diem and Nhu were murdered the next day by soldiers who tracked them down to their hiding place in the Chinese section of Saigon. McCone was at a meeting in the Cabinet Room when President Kennedy heard about the killings. "Kennedy leaped to his feet and rushed from the room with a look of shock and dismay on his face which I had never seen before," recalled Maxwell Taylor, who also was present. No one there believed the early reports that Diem and Nhu had committed suicide, and McCone advised the administration to keep away from the affair for now. He reported that Conein had refused the coup leaders' offer to show him the Ngos' bodies. "Conein is pretty conscious that it was assassination, and he didn't want to get involved with it. I would suggest that we not get into...this story. Knowing it doesn't do us any good...I don't think we gain anything by it." After a few days of public disengagement, the United

⁶⁵ Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 221; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 214; Helms and Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...White House Meeting on Vietnam...29 October 1963," DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 3, folder 15; Paul Eckel (NSC), "Minutes of Meeting of the Special Group, 24 October 1963," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 6; [] had recommended to Lodge that "we not set ourselves irrevocably against the assassination plot, since the other two alternatives mean either a bloodbath in Saigon or a protracted struggle which could rip the Army and the country asunder." McCone immediately told [] to retract his recommendation, asserting that the United States could not condone assassination without "engaging our responsibility" for it. [] "The Demise of the House of Ngo," 194. ~~X~~

⁶⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman..." 31 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 8; Church Committee, *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 221; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself concerning South Viet Nam," 25 October 1963, and "Notes on Meeting...re South Viet Nam," 29 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; [] "Memorandum of a Conference with the President...October 29, 1963..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 470-71. ~~X~~

~~SECRET~~*Waging Camelot's Counterinsurgencies (II): Vietnam (U)*

A contemporary political cartoon suggested CIA complicity in Diem's ouster and murder. (U)

States officially recognized the new military government in Saigon on 8 November. Lodge was authorized to announce the resumption of full economic and military aid at an optimum time (he did so the next day).⁶⁷

Meanwhile, McCone briefed some of the Agency's congressional overseers about Diem's demise and sent Colby to Saigon to assess the situation and to consolidate CIA's relationship with the ruling generals. The Agency's role in the immediate postcoup period was limited mainly for two rea-

sons: Ambassador Lodge continued to restrict official contacts with the Saigon government; and Operation SWITCHBACK was nearly complete, and the US Army took the lead in paramilitary counterinsurgency efforts. Colby, who spent over two weeks in South Vietnam, found the ARVN junta friendly and receptive but doubted that "it would stir itself sufficiently to lead a dynamic program in the countryside"—a particularly worrisome prospect as the Strategic Hamlet Program had failed during the summer and autumn of political turmoil. The generals were too busy struggling with their new responsibilities to engage the station fully in planning joint intelligence activities.⁶⁸

McCone and nearly all the top US officials involved with Vietnam—including Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, Lodge, Taylor, Felt, Harkins, and Krulak—met in Honolulu in mid-November to discuss postcoup developments and policy options. On matters affecting CIA, they decided to concentrate on the construction of strategic hamlets and on counterinsurgency operations in the Mekong Delta region, where the military situation was the worst. The policymakers also decided to consider expanding clandestine operations against North Vietnam after agreeing that the current program was ineffective.

in drafting a study of scenarios of stepped-up activities against the North. (The program, which would later be known as Operations Plan 34A-64, was implemented during the Johnson administration and will be discussed in Chapter 15.)⁶⁹

Before the conference began, McCone had a strained private dinner with Lodge in Honolulu on the 19th, at which they discussed—and, at times, fenced over—assorted Agency

⁶⁷ Mann, 296; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 997; DEPTTEL 700 to Embassy Saigon, 2 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, IV, *Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 540–41; Cooper, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on the Situation in SVN in Cabinet Room," 1 November 1963, and [redacted]; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 301; transcript of tape-recorded NSC Executive Committee meeting on 2 November 1963, tape A55, JFK Library, quoted in Jones, *Death of a Generation*, 427.

Presumably anticipating some finger pointing from Congress, PFIAB, or even the White House late in his tenure or afterward, McCone wanted to ensure before he left the Agency that the record showed that CIA was not responsible for Diem's ouster. In September 1964, he directed the Inspector General, with the assistance of his executive assistant, Walter Elder, to compile a record of his and CIA's positions and actions on Vietnam before and after the coup. It was an exercise in bureaucratic cover; "he did not want to have another Bay of Pigs hung around his neck," a senior Agency officer wrote a few years later. "Memorandum for the Record...Record on Vietnam," 1 June 1967, OIG Files, Job 74B00779R, box 1, folder 2. After investigating CIA's role in various assassination plots against foreign leaders, the Church Committee concluded in 1975 that "[t]here is no available evidence to give any indication of direct or indirect involvement of the United States" in the deaths of Diem and Nhu. *Alleged Assassination Plots*, 223.

⁶⁸ "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 37; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 217–18; Colby telegrams from Saigon station to Headquarters (SAIG 2499 and 2540), 16 and 19 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, IV, *Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 602–3, 607–8; Thomas J. Ahern Jr., *CIA and the Generals: Covert Support to Military Government in South Vietnam*, 9–12. McCone wanted Colby to go to South Vietnam under presidential authority so Lodge could not obstruct him, but even Kennedy's imprimatur to the visit did not convince the ambassador to relax his control over Agency activities. Colby, *Lost Victory*, 157–58.

⁶⁹ "Memorandum of Discussion at the Special Meeting on Vietnam, Honolulu, November 20, 1963," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, IV, *Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 608–24; Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 4. The Pentagon was determined to intensify paramilitary and clandestine activity across the DMZ. Colby has written that McNamara "listened to me with a cold look" when he advised ending infiltrations into the North. *Honorable Men*, 220. The administration's reviews of the Strategic Hamlet Program around this time focused on the South Vietnamese's political and managerial mistakes and did not address whether there were basic flaws in the concept. Latham, 197–203.

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issues. Lodge explained why his relationship with John Richardson had gone bad and said he was "extremely high" on acting COS [REDACTED] and wanted him to remain in Saigon. The DCI made no commitments. He challenged the ambassador's frequent assertions that the Diem regime's iniquitous reputation was attributable in part to its use of forced labor to build the strategic hamlets. After Lodge said the hamlets would be built by the same workers who would now receive adequate pay, McCone responded that doing so only meant higher costs to the American taxpayer. The DCI told the ambassador that he would emerge from Vietnam "either as a political giant 14 feet tall" or "thoroughly washed-up"; Lodge "didn't care for this frank view." McCone returned to Washington on 21 November and told his deputies that he was "more discouraged about South Vietnam than ever" and "sensed that McNamara and Bundy have the same impression." Like the DCI, most of the other officials at the Honolulu meeting either were settling into their after-trip routines or were en route home when they heard that their own president had been assassinated.⁷⁰ ~~XX~~

The End of the Tunnel? (U)

The question of what John F. Kennedy would have done about Vietnam had he lived has fueled heated debate among scholars and administration defenders and detractors.⁷¹ Some officials and associates of the Kennedys, such as Michael Forrestal, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Kenneth O'Donnell, have contended that Kennedy planned to extricate the United States from Vietnam after his reelection. Others, among them Dean Rusk, insist they never heard the president discuss withdrawing US troops. Nothing in McCone's records indicates that he ever heard Kennedy say anything directly or indirectly about pulling out of Vietnam, and the DCI never proffered such advice himself. In late 1963, the president remained ambivalent about what to do, and the unclear intelligence picture from CIA and the military did not help

him make up his mind. He assumed that a communist takeover of South Vietnam would be a disastrous development for the United States. The speech he was to give in Dallas the day he was killed stated that, in reference to Southeast Asia, "[o]ur security and strength...directly depend on the security and strength of others." At the same time, Kennedy had profound reservations about committing American forces there. A phased withdrawal of 1,000 advisers by the end of 1963 was planned, and in September he told an interviewer that the South Vietnamese "are the ones who have to win it or lose it." (U)

Throughout his presidency, Kennedy believed that with the proper mix of men and means, the United States and South Vietnam eventually could defeat the communists. He and McCone differed greatly, however, on what that mix should be. Neither the president nor his advisers showed any interest in a negotiated settlement. Given his fascination with counterinsurgency and covert action, Kennedy undoubtedly would have approved [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the planned pullout of advisers was regarded inside the administration as a short-term political maneuver, not a strategic first step. Certainly the pessimistic forecasts he heard from McCone did not convince him that he should go back on his public statements that "[w]e are not there to see a war lost," and that "I think we should stay"—at least for the time being. Asked a few years later if the United States would have sent in more troops to prevent defeat, Robert Kennedy, who knew his brother's thinking better than anyone, said "[w]e'd face that when we came to it." What is certain is that suddenly after 22 November 1963, McCone had to work under a new president with a very different personality and leadership style, a much more politicized conception of intelligence, and—for as long as he was DCI—far more determination to prevail in Vietnam. (U)

⁷⁰ Knoche, "Notes on DCI Description of Honolulu Sessions (as covered in the Morning Meeting, 21 November 1963)," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 4. McCone's encounter with Lodge did not produce the rapprochement that McGeorge Bundy had hoped for. At a preconference staff meeting on 13 November, he had remarked that "if we could just get the ex-Eisenhower administration people together, everything would be fine." "Memorandum for the Record of Discussion at the Daily White House Staff Meeting...November 13, 1963..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 593. ~~XX~~

⁷¹ Sources for this section are: Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 722-23; Giglio, 253-54; Rust, x-xi; Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, 198-209; Fredrik Logevall, "Vietnam and the Question of What Might Have Been," in Mark J. White, ed., *Kennedy: The New Frontier Revisited*, 19-62; *Robert Kennedy In His Own Words*, 394-95; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, 660, 673; Thomas Brown, *JFK: History of an Image*, 37. The most persuasive argument that Kennedy would not have withdrawn US personnel from Vietnam is Noam Chomsky, *Rethinking Camelot*, 63-86; the most elaborate argument that he would have is Jones, *Death of a Generation*; and James K. Galbraith, "Exit Strategy," *Boston Review* 28, no. 5 (October-November 2003): 353-407. (U)

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CHAPTER

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Managing the Technological Revolution in Intelligence (U)

John McCone's leadership of CIA stands out for two significant achievements in science and technology: the creation of a directorate dedicated to those fields and the defense of CIA's role in satellite reconnaissance against a takeover by the Pentagon. McCone's experience as an engineer and manager of large technology, military, and energy organizations in the private and public sectors suited him to reorganize and supervise the Agency's mélange of scientific and technical offices. He believed strongly that to compete in bureaucratic battles over space reconnaissance, especially against an aggressive Air Force leadership, CIA had to strengthen management of its scientific and technological capabilities. In creating a Directorate of Science and Technology and in making Albert Wheelon the DS&T's first leader, McCone set up a unit with the personnel, budget, and mission to manage coherently CIA's scientific and technological programs inside the Agency and to assert its interests in the Intelligence Community. By carrying out the largest rearrangement of human, financial, and material resources of his tenure, McCone—with Wheelon's indispensable help—went far toward regaining for CIA the stature it had lost after the Bay of Pigs disaster and enabling it to fight an interdepartmental struggle over the future of technical intelligence collection. Lastly, the two initiated a change in the Agency's culture that reduced the influence of clandestine operators and Eastern-educated intellectuals and raised the standing of experts in esoteric disciplines, who had entered the secret world from outside customary social and professional circles. (U)

The Seeds of the DS&T (U)

That CIA needed a separate science and technology component was evident to an influential study group called the Technological Capabilities Panel (TCP). The panel was convened in 1954 by President Dwight Eisenhower, who was concerned that the United States was vulnerable to a sur-

prise strategic attack from the Soviet Union. Eisenhower authorized the president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, James Killian, to organize a team of experts to study the potential for a nuclear Pearl Harbor.¹ Killian hoped the TCP exercise would persuade Eisenhower that strategic policymaking needed more scientific and technical input than it was receiving from the advocates of various weapons systems. One of the group's subcommittees, headed by Polaroid's president Edwin "Din" Land, investigated the nation's intelligence capabilities, especially against the Soviet Union. ~~XX~~

The TCP's report, titled "Meeting the Threat of Surprise Attack," declared that "We obtain little significant information from classical covert operations inside Russia.... We cannot hope to circumvent these elaborate [Soviet security] measures in an easy way. But we can use the ultimate in science and technology to improve our intelligence take." The TCP recommended "a vigorous program for the extensive use, in many intelligence procedures, of the most advanced knowledge in science and technology"—"a research program producing a stream of new intelligence tools and techniques." Land's subcommittee encouraged DCI Allen Dulles to seize "a unique opportunity for comprehensive intelligence" by developing a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft—a proposal that soon led to the design and construction of the U-2.² ~~XX~~



Edwin "Din" Land (U)

¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Richard V. Damms, "James Killian, the Technological Capabilities Panel, and the Emergence of President Eisenhower's 'Scientific-Technological Elite,'" *DH* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 59, 65–72; Dwayne A. Day, "A Strategy for Reconnaissance: Dwight D. Eisenhower and Freedom of Space," in Dwayne A. Day et al., eds., *Eye in the Sky: The Story of the Corona Spy Satellites*, 120–25; R. Carsill Hall, "The Eisenhower Administration and the Cold War," *Prologue* 27 (1995): 61–62, 70 n. 10; James R. Killian, *Sputnik, Scientists, and Eisenhower*, 67–90; [The Directorate for Science and Technology, 1962–1970,] DDS&T Historical Series No. 1, 5 vols. (1972), vol. 1, 3–4; Donald E. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology: Origins of a Directorate," *Studies* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 13–16. ~~XX~~

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At about the same time, the Eisenhower administration and the Agency were taking in the admonitions of another presidential commission concerning technology and intelligence. This blue-ribbon panel, chaired by Gen. James Doolittle, the leader of the famous air raid on Tokyo in 1942, had been convened in mid-1954 to review CIA's clandestine operations and recommend improvements. Doolittle's commission concluded that the United States was losing the intelligence war to the more experienced and ruthless KGB and must play to its main strength—technological prowess—to prevail. "[M]uch more effort should be expended in exploring every possible scientific and technical avenue of approach to the intelligence problem," the panel stated in its September 1954 report.

We believe that every known technique should be intensively applied and new ones should be developed to increase our intelligence acquisition by communications and electronic surveillance, high altitude visual, photographic and radar reconnaissance with manned or unmanned vehicles, upper atmosphere and oceanographic studies, [and] physical and chemical research. From such sources may come early warning of impending attack. No price is too high to pay for this knowledge.³ (U)

CIA responded to these panels' recommendations by forming a Scientific Advisory Board comprising mainly former TCP members. The board, which came to be called the Land Panel after its chairman, had a major impact on the Agency's scientific and technical activities, especially in overhead reconnaissance. Administratively, the board was attached to the office of the DCI's special assistant for planning and coordination, Richard Bissell. Bissell ran the Development Projects Staff and oversaw the U-2, CORONA, and OXCART (A-12) reconnaissance programs. He was CIA's point man in exploiting science and technology for collection purposes and got along well with the board.⁴ Nonetheless, the Agency did not have an entity dedicated to coordinating scientific and technical intelligence activities then pursued independently in CIA's three

directorates. Dulles did not act on an internal proposal made in 1957 to create a science and technology directorate—probably because it got no support from Bissell, who wanted to keep tight control over his projects and opposed any consolidation.⁵ ~~XX~~

When Bissell became DDP in 1958, he took the Development Projects Staff with him, renamed it the Development Projects Division (DPD), and used it (along with the Technical Services Staff—which he would later elevate to a division) to support espionage and covert action operations. That rearrangement upset Land and Killian, who believed CIA's research and development efforts should remain separate from its clandestine activities. They also feared Bissell would become too involved with covert action to devote enough time to overhead reconnaissance. In his final months at CIA, Bissell found himself in a tussle with Land and Killian—PFIAB's two most influential members. At their urging, PFIAB advocated centralizing all CIA scientific and technical programs and separating scientific collection from covert operations. Bissell resisted, but his position grew untenable after his patron Dulles was forced to resign in November 1961 and McCone took over.⁶ ~~XX~~

By that time, traditional forms of intelligence collection—HUMINT and clandestine technical operations—were losing their primacy to overhead reconnaissance. CIA's achievements with the U-2 and CORONA in targeting the Soviet Union and Cuba demonstrated the value of aerial and space-based systems and underscored the limitations of HUMINT. McCone regarded what came to be called "national technical means" as more vital to the Agency's mission than agents or surveillance devices. He set out to overhaul CIA's scientific and technical programs, which he believed were inefficiently organized and poorly managed by executives wedded to clandestine operations. His preference for technical intelligence fit neatly with the White House's predisposition after the Cuban missile crisis to trust "hard intelligence," such as photographs and SIGINT, more than human sources and experts' assessments.⁷ (U)

² Even before the TCP's report was released in February 1955, Land privately urged Dulles to "assert your first right to pioneer in scientific techniques for collecting intelligence." Land letter to Dulles with attached memorandum, "A Unique Opportunity for Comprehensive Intelligence," 5 November 1954, MORI doc. no. 38447. Land and Killian were also instrumental in promoting the joint CIA-Air Force reconnaissance satellite program later known as CORONA. (U)

³ Special Study Group, "Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency," 30 September 1954, CMS Files, Job 82M00311, box 1, folder 23. (U)

⁴ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 16, 22; Day, "A Strategy for Reconnaissance," 135. ~~XX~~

⁵ [redacted] vol. 1, 4-5. ~~XX~~

⁶ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 191-92; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; Edwin H. Land oral history interview by [redacted] Cambridge, MA, 17 and 20 September 1984 (hereafter Land/ [redacted] OH), 8. ~~XX~~

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~~SECRET~~*Managing the Technological Revolution in Intelligence (U)***Confronting Bureaucratic Resistance (U)**

PFIAB pressure to consolidate CIA's scientific and technological capabilities peaked at about the time McCone became DCI. Killian and Land had worried that the post-Bay of Pigs leadership shakeup at Langley would damage the Agency's technical collection programs, but McCone's own agenda conformed closely to theirs.⁸ He also had White House blessing to make substantial changes at Langley. As an outsider taking over at a time of management disarray and low morale, however, he had to act prudently. Killian and Land could remain above the fray, expressing dissatisfaction at the pace with which McCone implemented their *ex cathedra* recommendations, but the DCI had to move cautiously to preserve his authority and avoid a backlash from vested interests in the Agency. (U)

McCone found CIA's scientific and technological activities widely scattered. The reconnaissance program remained where Bissell had taken it, the DDP's Development Projects Division, as did the Technical Services Division (TSD), making devices for use in espionage and covert action. [redacted]

[redacted] The DI had the Office of Scientific Intelligence (OSI) to analyze basic research, and it also ran NPIC. McCone's original concept was to pull together all of these components in one directorate, where the Agency's technical talent could exchange ideas and information, interact with private industry and other government agencies, and serve as a large organizational "magnet" to attract highly qualified personnel to careers in technical intelligence.⁹ ~~XX~~

In one of his first meetings with PFIAB, McCone heard Killian and Land strongly express their concern that continued association of the Agency's scientific and technical development programs with the DDP would harm them. After that meeting, McCone set up the Working Group on Organization and Activities, chaired by Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick, to review the Agency's structure and activities. The Kirkpatrick Working Group gave special attention to the idea of creating a new directorate of research

and development. The DCI asked his deputy directors to comment on the suggestion. Bissell vehemently opposed it. Among other points, he argued that SIGINT collection should remain in the DDP because of [redacted] and he argued that TSD's development of tradecraft equipment could not be separated from the DDP's operational use of it. Bissell might have felt emboldened to resist because McCone, depressed and uncertain whether he would remain as DCI after his wife of many years died in December 1961, had asked Bissell to delay his resignation—indicating that the new DCI needed the veteran DDP's judgment and influence.¹⁰ ~~XX~~

McCone soon decided to stay, however, and in late January 1962, unconvinced and undaunted by Bissell's dissent, he told PFIAB that he intended to appoint a new deputy director to supervise technical collection and to consolidate CIA's scientific activities. Bissell sent the DCI additional objections in early February that, along with those he had raised earlier, presaged the internal opposition McCone would soon face. The DDP now criticized the proposed movement of OSI and NPIC from the DI to a new directorate. He also contended that activities that appropriately could be taken from the DDP and the DI—airial and space reconnaissance—did not require the attention of a deputy director and could be managed by a special assistant. By now Bissell was ready to respond to McCone's request, made in December, that he run the new directorate. He declined, saying that acceptance "would mean a long step backward," and he resigned from CIA in mid-February.¹¹ ~~XX~~

On 16 February, McCone issued a notice creating the Directorate of Research (DR), effective on the 19th. He promoted Herbert "Pete" Scoville, then head of OSI, making him the first deputy director for research (DDR). Before joining CIA in 1955, Scoville had been senior scientist at Los Alamos and technical director of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project; colleagues considered him one of the nation's leading experts on warheads. He lacked Bissell's forceful character and bureaucratic clout, however, and soon

⁷ Ranelagh, 415. For a description of John Kennedy's fascination with imagery, see Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 57–58. (U)

⁸ Transcript of Albert Wheelon lecture at CIA Headquarters, "Genesis of a Unique National Capability," 19 September 1984, 13, copy on file in the History Staff. (U)

⁹ McCone untitled memorandum to Bundy, 12 February 1962, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies, Box 271, Central Intelligence Agency, General, 1/62–2/61, JFK Library; McCone memorandum about meeting with Robert Kennedy on 27 December 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 173. ~~XX~~

¹⁰ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; [redacted] vol. 1, 7; Bissell, 203. ~~XX~~

¹¹ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22; [redacted] vol. 1, 7; Bissell letters to McCone, 7 and 16 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 10. ~~XX~~

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found himself in the middle of an organizational conflict without the means or support to wage it effectively.¹² ~~X~~

McCone's notice stated that "other activities in Research and Development will be placed under DD/R as appropriate." What "as appropriate" meant soon became apparent when Scoville circulated a draft proposal describing the responsibilities and structure of the new directorate. He recommended placing three types of activity under his management: research and development of technical collection and data processing systems, production of intelligence on foreign scientific and technical capabilities, and operations that used either technical collection methods or human assets against science and technology targets. Scoville specifically wanted the DR to take over the following:



Herbert "Pete" Scoville (U)

- from the DDP, the [redacted] of DPD and the research, development, and laboratory component of TSD;
- from the DI, OSI;
- all ELINT activities Agency-wide; and
- from the Office of Communications (OC), research and development work [redacted]

¹³ ~~X~~

McCone's establishment of the DR and Scoville's proposed restructuring evoked intense reaction from senior Agency managers, who forced the DCI to curtail the pace and scope of his plan. The most vigorous resistance came from DDI Robert Amory and his successor, Ray Cline. They opposed the transfer of OSI, maintaining that juris-

diction for intelligence assessments of foreign countries—particularly the Soviet Union—should not be subdivided and that another office would have to be created to replace OSI's production of finished intelligence and contributions to estimates. Cline, well known for his bluntness, claimed later that McCone wanted to put OSI in the DR "to give some warm bodies and an appearance of bulk to the Directorate" and that, because of the shift, "CIA advocacy of its own scientific collection techniques became mixed up with its objective analysis of scientific and technical developments. The appearance of objectivity was hard to maintain when analysis and collection were supervised by the same staff." After the reorganization went into effect, Cline fought what he called a "rearguard action" to regain OSI's analytic function. The Kirkpatrick Working Group also commented on the issue in its report in early April, recommending that the DI keep OSI but give NPIC to the new directorate.¹⁴ ~~X~~

Richard Helms, Bissell's replacement as DDP, saw early compromise as the best tactic. He agreed to relinquish the parts of TSD that did not directly support secret operations, but he fought tenaciously to retain those that did. Helms figured that McCone—contrary to the Kirkpatrick Working Group's recommendation that the DDR be given some operational responsibilities—would defer to his judgment on this issue as on others related to clandestine activities.¹⁵ ~~X~~

After three months of high-level opposition, Kirkpatrick—by then named the first executive director—recommended to McCone that he accept less than total success. Kirkpatrick had spent several fruitless weeks working with Scoville on a draft headquarters notice setting forth the DR's terms of reference. In the face of the Amory-Cline-Helms resistance, the executive director had concluded that it was "preferable to allow the DD/R to grow by evolution and accretion rather than any drastic surgery on either DD/I or DD/P." Kirkpatrick's group regarded the OXCART, the projected supersonic successor to the U-2, as the DR's most important project and warned that the new directorate

¹² Headquarters Notice [HN] 1-9, 16 February 1962, [redacted] vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 2; biographic profile of Scoville, *ibid.*, Appendix B, tab 26; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24. ~~X~~

¹³ [redacted] vol. 1, 10; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "Activities of DD/R," February 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19. ~~X~~

¹⁴ [redacted] vol. 1, 11-13; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 22-23; Amory memorandum to McCone, "The Proper Location of OSI," 19 March 1962, and [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Proper Location of OSI," 21 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 199-200; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 3-4. ~~X~~

[redacted] vol. 1, 10-11; Helms memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Location of TSD/R&D in the Agency," March 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone memorandum about Kirkpatrick Working Group report, 29 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; HN 1-15, 16 April 1962, [redacted] vol. 3, Appendix 1, tab 3. ~~X~~

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~~SECRET~~*Managing the Technological Revolution in Intelligence (U)*

"must be restrained from taking on collateral activities so fast that OXCART will suffer."¹⁶ ~~XX~~

A few more weeks of piecemeal progress followed. McCone approved personnel allocations for the DR staff and the appointment of an assistant deputy director for research, Col. Edward Giller. Giller was a trained engineer, worked on Air Force weapons projects in the 1950s, and most recently was deputy chief of TSD. McCone and Scoville may have selected Giller—his qualifications notwithstanding—to placate the DDP.¹⁷ ~~XX~~

By this time, McCone and Scoville wanted to get the new directorate up and running, so they deferred action on unresolved issues. They did not press further to strip the Clandestine Services of other scientific and technical elements because they had heard that key staffers in DPD were so mad at being moved to the DR that they were considering leaving the Agency and working for some of its contractors. McCone later wrote that forcing the intelligence and operations directorates to turn over OSI and TSD, respectively, "would incur great risk of impairing [their] fundamental missions." The long-awaited headquarters notice describing the DR's mission and responsibilities came out in late July. The DR would have authority over scientific and technical research and development in support of intelligence collection, but the DDP would stay in charge of technical programs supporting agent operations and covert action. The DDR would provide overall guidance of ELINT activities but would not delve into related operational matters. Three new components were created: the Offices of Research and Development (ORD), Electronic Collection (OEL), and Special Activities (OSA), the latter dealing with overhead reconnaissance.¹⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone's actions during the DR's first months typify his "chairman of the board" leadership style as DCI. He was content to lay down general guidelines for the directorate at the outset and leave administrative details, especially resolution of jurisdictional conflicts, to others. He was willing to take bureaucratic risks but in ways that contained potential damage. Creating the DR inevitably would be controversial because, as Executive Assistant Walter Elder later remarked, "you could do it only by carving it out of the flesh and blood of existing components."¹⁹ By delegating turf battles to his DDCI and executive director, McCone gave the new directorate's critics, such as Cline and Helms, opportunities to mobilize allies and obstruct implementation. The DCI, however—belying his reputation as a brusque, heavy handed boss—appears in this case to have concluded that a major organizational change could best be achieved by letting bureaucratic politics and tempers run their courses instead of imposing the new arrangement by fiat. He took a more guarded approach here than in the management shuffle he quickly carried out in his first 100 days because far more serious and extensive equities were now at stake. ~~XX~~

Disarray, Distractions, and Disputes (U)

The new arrangement McCone's deputies had worked out soon proved unsatisfactory. Even with its more limited responsibilities, the DR as mandated by McCone in July 1962 "never had a fighting chance," a former CIA historian and DS&T officer has concluded. "Pete Scoville's writ ran long on the tasks his new directorate was supposed to accomplish and short on the manpower needed to achieve such goals." Aside from some officers in OSA, who took responsibility for the old DPD's reconnaissance projects, most of the Agency's scientific and technical talent remained in OSI. In addition, delays in securing enough space in the new Headquarters building, transferring personnel from

¹⁶ [redacted] vol. 1, 14–15; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Organization of the Office of the Deputy Director (Research)," 17 May 1962, ER Files, 1676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone, "Notes on Discussion...Review of Report of the Kirkpatrick Committee," 29 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1. ~~XX~~

¹⁷ [redacted] vol. 2, 15–17; biographic profile of Giller, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix B, tab 13. ~~XX~~

¹⁸ [redacted] "CIA and the National Reconnaissance Office," unpublished manuscript (April 1986), 22–23; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "Responsibilities of the DD/R," 20 June 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 19; McCone memorandum, "Organization of DD/R," 24 July 1962, quoted in [redacted] vol. 1, 17; HN 1–23, 30 July 1962, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 4. The directorate's new components are described in *ibid.*, vol. 1, 19–29. Oddly, considering the importance the DCI placed on the concept and the clamor it raised, the notice was issued over DDCI Marshall Carter's signature, not McCone's. The DCI probably was busy preparing for his upcoming wedding. ~~XX~~

¹⁹ Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 12–13. ~~XX~~

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CHAPTER 9

other components, and setting up a new career service with a special pay structure made the DR seem like a bureaucratic stepchild.²⁰ ~~(S)~~

Difficult, high-profile technical intelligence problems arose during Scoville's first months and diverted his and McCone's time and attention from building the DR. The most difficult of these was the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba in October 1962. The DCI, the DDR, and the ADDR—along with NPIC director Arthur Lundahl—were the primary Agency participants in meetings on the crisis. A less well-known distraction was determining whether a newly discovered Soviet missile installation near Tallinn, Estonia, was intended to intercept aircraft or missiles.²¹ Moreover, throughout late 1962 and early 1963, McCone and Scoville clashed continually with the Department of Defense over control of the recently created NRO and the nature of the satellite reconnaissance program. The DCI and the DDR did not always agree on how to manage the Agency's side of the dispute, however, and both the development of the new directorate and Scoville's standing with McCone suffered from this interdepartmental conflict.

Seventh Floor Frustrations (U)

By late 1962, the halting development of the DR and Scoville's ineffectiveness plainly displeased McCone. He regarded CIA's entire scientific effort as unimaginative and sluggish and Scoville as too passive in projecting the Agency's viewpoint in the Intelligence Community. He thought, for example, that the DDR's diffidence caused the White House to assign responsibility for evaluating Soviet nuclear tests to an outside group of experts (the Bethe Panel) instead of to Agency officers. McCone wearied of Scoville's continual complaints about inadequate resources. According to Kirkpatrick, the DCI "exploded" when informed that Scoville wanted to discuss organization again and said he "ought to get down to work...and stop fussing about what he didn't have because morale in his own organization was rock bottom." The DDP's and DI's foot dragging also

annoyed McCone, and he complained that the two deputy directors never raised scientific matters with him.

If you [Helms and Cline] would only come in and talk to me just once about science I'd feel better about [the] scientific end of your business. But you come in and talk to me about clandestine operations, and about reports, and about studies, and about every other damn thing, but you never come in and talk to me about science.... Ray [Cline] will sit up all night and talk about history, but he won't talk about [science].

In addition, McCone and Scoville's differences over arms control—on which the DCI had hardline views—may have caused further contention. As an assistant to President Eisenhower's science adviser, Scoville—a liberal Democrat—had urged negotiation of a test ban treaty and contended that it could be adequately monitored using then-current technology, a position McCone, then chairman of the AEC, opposed.²² ~~(S)~~

For his part, Scoville was frustrated by what he considered McCone's lack of support, and he was tired of the internal and external turf battles and the DCI's unrelenting pressure. "Hardly a day went by," he recalled, "that [McCone] wasn't down on my neck because we hadn't done this or that...." Some DR staff members thought Scoville was "too gentlemanly" to assert his Agency and community roles, but he believed McCone had weakened his position by failing to resolve the feud over NRO. Scoville thought he could not simultaneously represent CIA's interests in government-wide programs and administer its own scientific and technical activities without the full backing of the Agency's top managers, especially the DCI. He later wrote that "I found myself continuously in the position of being held responsible for matters which I have had neither the authority nor the means to control."²³ ~~(S)~~

Killian and Land were not satisfied with the new directorate either and complained to McCone in January 1963.

²⁰ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 23–24; Herbert "Pete" Scoville oral history interview by [redacted] McLean, VA, 27 January 1989 (hereafter Scoville [redacted] DH), 17; [redacted] vol. 1, 29–37. Years later, Scoville disparaged OSA as an attempt to try and bring together some of the cats and dogs." The DR career service finally was instituted in February 1963. DR Directive 20-1, 19 February 1963, [redacted] vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 5. ~~(S)~~

²¹ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24. ~~(S)~~

²² Transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, 7, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; [redacted] vol. 1, 38–39; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 10 August 1962; Kirkpatrick memorandum, "Discussion with the Director of Central Intelligence on Deputy Director/Research...", 1 October 1962, *ibid.*, box 32, folder 19; [redacted] "CIA and the NRO," 21; Scoville, "Policing a Nuclear Test Ban," *Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1959): 1–14. The DCI also became visibly perturbed when Scoville called him "John" instead of "Mr. McCone." Wheelon [redacted] DH, 22. ~~(S)~~

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The DCI explained that under current circumstances, the massive restructuring Killian had in mind could not be brought about "unless by direct order from me against the objections from General Carter and virtually the entire organization within CIA." Two months later, PFIAB issued a paper, "Recommendations on Technical Capabilities," which criticized the community for inadequately exploiting science and technology for intelligence purposes. Two of the board's many detailed proposals related directly to the DR's shortcomings. Creating "an administrative arrangement in the CIA whereby the whole spectrum of modern science and technology can be brought into contact with major programs and projects of the Agency" would remedy the "present fragmentation and compartmentation." The board also called for "clear vesting of these broadened responsibilities in the top technical official of the CIA, operating at the level of Deputy Director." In effect, Killian and Land were telling McCone to be much bolder in consolidating the Agency's scientific and technical efforts. In April, he responded that he had made some progress and promised more. The "period of observation" of internal reaction "has now lapsed," and he would "move ahead with additional changes" that included giving the DDR "expanded responsibilities."²⁴

In mid-1963, McCone established three panels to help him address some of the problems PFIAB identified—especially interdirectorate miscommunication and miscoordination—and to provide him with an objective assessment of CIA's scientific enterprises. Internally, he set up the Agency Research and Development Review Board, comprising the heads of offices engaged in technical work—the DR, TSD, OSI, NPIC, and OC—and chaired by the DDCI. This group reviewed and integrated projects and activities to encourage cooperation and focus on the Agency's broader mission of collecting and analyzing scientific intelligence. It discussed subjects such as [redacted] [redacted] audiosurveillance countermeasures, the use of bio-electronic techniques to monitor human physiological

reactions, multisensor imagery systems, and ways to keep CIA informed about innovations in American industry. The board acted more as an arbiter of programmatic compromises than as a true agenda-setting and coordinating body. According to one member, it believed that one of its main functions was to protect the DR from bureaucratic poaching. A second inside entity, the Scientific and Technical Personnel Advisory Committee, was tasked with improving CIA's ability to attract, use, and retain personnel from the science and technology world. Headed by the director of personnel, its members came from the DR, TSD, OSI, and OC. It established criteria for appointments and instituted a premium pay schedule for technical positions.²⁵

Externally, McCone formed a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to review and advise him on the Agency's scientific and technical enterprises. The DCI, who favored the concept of the experts' advisory committee, initially raised the idea soon after the DR was formed. The SAB, a panel of prominent practitioners from the principal branches of science, superseded the CIA Research Board (also known as the de Flores Committee) that for years had concentrated on scientific work for TSD to support clandestine operations. The new board was to evaluate individual programs run by staff and contractors and to point out possible applications of new technologies to intelligence activities. The SAB met periodically through McCone's tenure, and the DCI conferred with its chairman—Augustus Kinzel, a metallurgist and vice president of Union Carbide—at least 10 times through early 1965 (all off the record).²⁶

The New Chief Wizard (U)

Scoville sent McCone a letter of resignation on 25 April 1963, citing the other deputy directors' inflexibility and the DCI's indecisiveness as the reasons for his departure. Years later, Scoville added that he left because McCone made him answerable for the performance of scientific and technical

²³ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24; Scoville [redacted] OH, 4; Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 57–58; Scoville letter to McCone, 25 April 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 20.

²⁴ McCone letter to Killian, 27 December 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-383, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Dr. Killian, January 21st," dated 22 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; [redacted] vol. 1, 42–46; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 24–25.

²⁵ Agency Research and Development Review Board documentation in DS&T Files, Job 79R00313A, box 4, folder 8; [redacted] vol. 1, 35–37, 80–81; HN 20-88, 26 March 1963, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 6. When Albert Wheelon became DDS&T in August 1963, he replaced Carter as chairman of the Research and Development Review Board.

²⁶ [redacted] vol. 1, 82–83, vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 9, vol. 6, Appendix E, tab 1; Scoville memorandum to McCone, "CIA Science Advisory Committee," 5 May 1962, HS Files, HS/HC-385, Job 84T00286R, box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum to PFIAB, "Establishment of a CIA Research and Development Advisory Board," July 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 12, folder 347. The SAB was different from the older panel of the same name that Edwin Land headed. McCone's successor, William Raborn, disbanded the newer SAB in late 1965, and Wheelon designated several specialized committees to take over its function.

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components over which he had no authority. "McCone would go around town saying I was responsible for all scientific activity in the Agency, and yet he refused to transfer to me the biggest scientific group, my old group of people with whom I had worked [OSI]...." Scoville asked that his resignation take effect 1 June (later extended to the 14th).²⁷

McCone earlier had said he did not care who ran the DR as long as it was organized and managed properly, and he moved to ensure that it was by asking Albert "Bud" Wheelon, the acting director of OSI, to replace Scoville.²⁸



Albert "Bud" Wheelon (U)

Wheelon, the son of an aeronautical engineer, was a technical *wunderkind* who enrolled at Stanford University at age 16 and earned a Ph.D. in physics from MIT when he was just 23. He worked as a missile and space engineer at Douglas Aircraft and Ramo-Woolridge (the predecessor of TRW) before joining the Agency to replace Scoville as director of OSI in June 1962. He impressed the Agency's leadership with his work as chairman of the interagency Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee during the Cuban missile crisis and on the nuclear test ban negotiations in early 1963. DDCI Carter, who was handling the high-level implementation of the DR's creation, told McCone that he had been "singularly impressed...at the calm, unruffled, quietly analytical, and remarkably astute manner in which Bud Wheelon approaches all problems.... He is one of our finest assets...." In addition, according to Wheelon, McCone appreciated that Wheelon alone had agreed with his judgment that the Soviet Union planned to put offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba.

When asked to become DDR, the brilliant and brash, 34-year-old Wheelon told McCone that "we shouldn't screw a good light bulb into a burned out socket." He was not interested in running the DR unless he had a mandate to make fundamental changes. After discussing the directorate's problems at length with Scoville, Wheelon agreed to serve with several provisos. He did not want the DR to be a staff entity, like the research and engineering component of the Department of Defense, but "a real honest-to-God line organization to carry out assigned responsibilities." He insisted on bringing OSI with him from the DI. He wanted full authority over Agency research and development, and he asked for a computer center and a missile intelligence center. Wheelon may have believed he could drive such a hard bargain because Elder had already assured him that the DCI would back him against the other deputy directors.

McCone said he saw "great advantages" in Wheelon's general plan, which fit his own preference for centralizing the Agency's scientific and technical functions, but also "dangers...unless Cline, Helms, and [DDS Lawrence K.] White are all aboard 100 percent." He again left the details and negotiations to the DDCI and the executive director—Cline once more proved the most implacable—and by the end of July an agreement was ready. Wheelon got most of what he wanted and a few other things besides. At his insistence, the DR would be renamed the Directorate of Science and Technology, and PFIAB's March 1963 recommendations would constitute its operating charter. The reorganization went into effect on 5 August.²⁹

In Wheelon, McCone had the hard-driving, steely infighter he needed to make the new directorate work. The new DDS&T had "three times the energy level" of his predecessor, one of his deputies recalled. Wheelon saw officials in the Intelligence Community either as colleagues, with whom he could cooperate, or as competitors, and, dur-

²⁷ Scoville letter to McCone, 25 April 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 20; Scoville OH, 18-19; [redacted] vol. 1, 46-47. McCone later claimed that the intractability of the CIA-NRO dispute caused Scoville nearly to have a nervous breakdown and prompted his resignation. Transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Clark Clifford, 6 April 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6. At the time Scoville resigned, he also was serving as deputy director of NRO. After he left the Agency, he became assistant director for science and technology at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; [redacted] vol. 2, 213-15.

²⁸ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: [redacted] vol. 1, 40, 47-50, 58-59; biographic profile of Wheelon, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix B, tab 32; transcript of McCone-Wheelon meeting, 16 July 1963, 4, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; biographic profile of Wheelon, HS Files, Job 84B00443R, box 1, folder 7; Wheelon personnel file no. 36534, HRM Files, Job 76-00195R, box 41, folder 9; Wheelon OH, 1-30; Wheelon lecture, 16; Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 68-73; Philip Taubman, *Secret Empire*, 333-37; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 12; Albert D. Wheelon oral history interview by [redacted] 15 October 1995 (hereafter Wheelon OH), 3, 18, 25-26. Wheelon's first experience with CIA was in 1956, when he was selected to assess the results of a "major breakthrough of heretofore denied intelligence on the Soviet missile program"—U-2 photography of previously unknown facilities—for USIB. Wheelon lecture, 8.

²⁹ [redacted] vol. 1, 50-57; HN 1-36 and HN 20-111, 5 August 1963, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix A, tabs 10 and 11. Helms argued to Carter that TSD should remain in the DR. Wheelon later said he did not ask for TSD because he did not think "the gadgetry of the Clandestine Service...was very important." Helms memorandum to Carter, "DDP/TSD Relationship to the DDS&T," DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; Wheelon OH, 26; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 72-73.

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ing his rapid ascent through academe and the defense industry, he had rarely experienced defeat. He consistently outmaneuvered Agency rivals in internal empire building. One colleague recalled that "[w]hen you take on Bud Wheelon, you're taking on a bureaucratic master, and Bud Wheelon ripped Ray [Cline] to shreds" in the dispute over where to put OSI. Agency veterans viewed Wheelon as an upstart outsider, but he did not seem to care. Before he joined the Agency, he told McCone and Kirkpatrick that he did not plan to make a career at Langley and was not bothered by the prospect of antagonizing other intelligence professionals. McCone, perhaps seeing some of his own traits in his assertive new deputy director, must have judged that Wheelon's determination and intelligence outweighed his faults and helped the intelligence process produce the results the DCI and policymakers demanded—always McCone's ultimate test of how well programs or personnel worked. Wheelon, in turn, thought McCone had "the finest analytical mind I had ever seen" and regarded him less as a manager than as "an extraordinarily intelligent entrepreneur, accustomed to changing course rapidly as events and opportunities presented themselves."³⁰

Wheelon achieved several of McCone's goals during the nearly two years they served together. Using the DS&T's expanded charter and special pay scale, he fashioned what possibly was the nation's most powerful development and engineering establishment. By the end of the decade, the directorate would design, build, and deploy technical collection systems that gave the United States a substantial intelligence advantage over its adversaries. During his first year,

Wheelon integrated OSI and the DS's Office of Computer Support into his directorate; established a missile and space analysis center over the vituperative opposition of powerful Air Force commanders, including Gen. Curtis LeMay; recruited senior personnel, mostly from industry; acquired sufficient space and budget during a period of fiscal stringency; organized a network of scientific boards and panels; and produced a new publication on current scientific intelligence, the *Daily Surveyor*.³¹

Conflict between the DS&T and the DI persisted, and Carter, at McCone's request, had to intervene and delineate areas of responsibility. Wheelon's directorate would produce finished intelligence on scientific and technical subjects (including contributions to estimates), and the DDS&T would be McCone's liaison with the scientific committees of USIB, which the DCI chaired. Cline's directorate retained overall responsibility for producing and disseminating finished intelligence, and the DDI would establish the Agency position on analytical issues USIB was considering. A senior officer in each directorate was designated to manage information sharing, coordination, and other forms of cooperation and support, which the DDCI instructed was to be "extensive...vigorous and effective."³²

By 1964, the DS&T comprised six offices: Computer Services, ELINT (renamed SIGINT Operations in 1978), Research and Development, Special Activities (renamed Development and Engineering in 1973), Scientific Intelligence, and the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center (FMSAC). (The two principal scientific and technical com-

³⁰ [redacted] vol. 1, 60; [redacted] and "Transfer of OSI from the Directorate of Intelligence," 6 August 1963.

Ranelagh, 491; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 72; Wheelon lecture, 13-14; Carter memorandum, "Relationships Between DD/I and DD/S&T," 30 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 4; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10; Wheelon OH, 13; McCone memorandum, "Organization of DD/R," 24 July 1963, and Kirkpatrick memorandum to Carter, "Organization of DD/R," 30 July 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 32, folder 19; [redacted] 440-52.

Wheelon could be overbearing even with his boss, which prompted an informal intervention from Kirkpatrick. In August 1964, the executive director advised him "to be more diplomatic" with McCone, reminding Wheelon that "he had no more persuasive advocate than the DCI, who was trying to fight his battles with other agencies." Kirkpatrick also suggested that Wheelon ease up on his subordinates and delegate more authority to DS&T managers. Wheelon "took all of this in good grace" but did not change his management style. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 6, entry for 14 August 1964.

In the tussle over OSI, Wheelon may have been settling a recent score with Cline. In early 1963, Wheelon—then head of OSI—told Kirkpatrick that he probably would not want to stay at the Agency much past the summer because he and Cline did not get along. He said their personalities were too much alike, and that Cline gave OSI precedence over Wheelon's shop in substantive matters and briefings, and wanted to relocate some OSI components into a new strategic problems office under Wheelon, who did not want that job. Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 28 January 1963. Cline regarded the loss of OSI as the greatest bureaucratic defeat of his career. [redacted] 440.

³¹ Welzenbach, "Science and Technology," 26; [redacted] vol. 1, 61-75, 84-87, 97-100, 107-23, 129-30; HN 20-115, HN 20-116, HN 1-39, and HN 20-125, dated 13 and 25 September and 7 and 13 November 1963; *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix A, tabs 12, 13, 16, and 18; Headquarters Regulation 20-24, 5 November 1964, *ibid.*, vol. 3, Appendix A, tab 26; HN 20-111, 5 August 1963, and HN 1-41, 26 November 1963, HS Files, Job 84-00161R, box 4, folder 15; [redacted] [executive assistant to the DDR] memorandum to the executive assistant to the DDS, "Publication of the Organization of the Deputy Director (Research), 20 February 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; Carter memoranda, "Approval of Separate Activities in the Science and Technology Area," and "Approval of Research and Development Activities," both dated 23 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 2; Karl H. Weber, "The Office of Scientific Intelligence, 1949-68," DDS&T Historical Series No. OSI-1, 3 vols. (June 1972), vol. 1, 57-72, copy on file in the DDS&T Information Review Office.

³² Carter memorandum to Kirkpatrick et al., "Relationships Between DD/I and DD/S&T," 30 October 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1; [redacted] 452.

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ponents still not included in the directorate were TSD and NPIC.) DS&T personnel respected Wheelon's brilliance, drive, and watchful oversight, but his demanding and sometimes harsh management and zealous protection of directorate prerogatives alienated many subordinates, officers elsewhere in the Agency (especially in the DI), and other Intelligence Community components. Old organizational loyalties, disruptions caused by personnel transfers (especially among the SIGINT staff), and disagreement over the authority the DI's Collection Guidance Staff had in tasking the DS&T, caused friction between the directorates. Nevertheless, McCone supported Wheelon's ends (in the same position, he probably would have used most of the same means), backed his DDS&T in most internal disputes, and favorably represented Wheelon's accomplishments to PFIAB and the White House.³³

The creation of FMSAC exemplified McCone's resoluteness.³⁴ He was dissatisfied with the community's analysis of foreign missile and space activity—learning of a Soviet space event from a wire service, not US intelligence sources, particularly irked him—and in late 1962 he discussed forming a joint intelligence center with the Department of Defense. After Pentagon officials raised jurisdictional objections, McCone told them CIA would establish its own all-source analysis facility to serve as a national component and not duplicate the activities of any service organization, such as the Army's missile intelligence unit and the Air Force's Foreign Technology Division.

FMSAC came into existence on 7 November 1963, under the direction of Carl Duckett, who joined the Agency after serving at the Army's Redstone Arsenal. Wheelon had met Duckett while working as a consultant in the late 1950s, and Duckett had so impressed McCone at a USIB meeting in 1962 that the DCI offered him a job. Under its charter, FMSAC would provide detailed technical intelligence on Soviet, Chinese, and other foreign space and offensive missile systems—including information on the trajectories, range, number of warheads, and accuracy of long-range missiles, and the movements and missions of sat-

ellites and space shots. The new organization would be the place in which all missile and space intelligence would be processed and analyzed, with results distributed to the White House, NASA, and other agencies. FMSAC also was to contribute indirectly to the development and deployment of collection systems.

The Air Force tried to obstruct FMSAC's work. Gen. Bernard Schriever, head of the Air Force Space Systems Command, bluntly explained the opposition of his service to FMSAC:

The establishment of this activity within CIA is most certainly the first step in competing with and possibly attempting to usurp the Services' capabilities in this area of scientific and technical intelligence...establishment of FMSAC has already resulted in undesirable competition for special talent and for special data...Such duplication and proselyting [sic] are unwise and imprudent, and could result in serious degradation of our Service intelligence capability.... CIA must be restrained from duplicating and eroding DOD technical intelligence capabilities which are vital to military technology just as CIA has been restrained from duplicating DOD strategic bombing intelligence...I believe immediate action should be taken to slow down or block CIA action to duplicate DOD missile and space intelligence.³⁵

Having failed to prevent the creation of FMSAC, the Pentagon established the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Center—a combined DIA-NSA operation—in June 1964. (U)

McCone spurned Secretary of Defense McNamara's follow-up suggestion that the two agencies form a joint committee on missile and space intelligence. By March 1965, FMSAC was operating 24 hours a day, and later that year, it was elevated to office status. The CIA-Pentagon competition to be first "on the street" with reports caused redundant effort, but the rivalry proved to be healthy and

³³ [redacted] 455-77; McCone memorandum to Bundy, "CIA Organization for Scientific and Technical Intelligence," 10 September 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 1.

³⁴ Sources used on FMSAC were [redacted] vol. 2, 335-38; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter on establishing FMSAC, 21 October 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXV, *Organization of Foreign Policy*, 218-19; "Notice: Establishment of the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center," 24 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 1; John Bross (NIPE) memorandum, "Conversation with Dr. Eugene Fubini," 6 March 1964, OGC Files, Job 86-00167R, box 3, folder 1589; Curtis Peebles, *The CORONA Project*, 252; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 79-87. Wheelon and OSI officer Sidney Graybeal argued the case for an entity like FMSAC in 1961; see their article "Intelligence for the Space Race," *Studies* 5, no. 4 (Fall 1961): 1-13.

³⁵ Schriever letter to Curtis LeMay (Air Force Chief of Staff), 26 December 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 22. (U)

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productive—unlike other aspects of the Agency's relations with the Department of Defense. ~~XX~~

Fight for the Sky Spies (U)

No issue other than Cuba and Vietnam occupied more of McCone's time than the protracted dispute over management of the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and NRO. With the assistance of Scoville and then Wheelon, McCone turned back Air Force attempts to monopolize space reconnaissance for military purposes. McCone held, almost to the point of dogma, that overhead reconnaissance was the sole responsibility of the DCI and that only CIA could effectively operate such programs. He believed the fate of satellite reconnaissance—widely viewed then as the future foundation of US intelligence collection—hinged on whether the Agency or the military controlled development and management of current and next-generation systems. He was determined to overcome what he termed the Air Force's "almost unbelievable phobia over [its] position in space" and to keep NRO from answering only to the secretary of defense. Well-versed in the NRP's engineering arcana, such as camera apertures and orbital apogees, McCone often wielded his knowledge as a weapon to defend CIA's technical accomplishments and protect its place in the program's organizational protocols. Ray Cline recalled that "only a few people really understood what [satellite collection] was all about, but [McCone] understood it. He never lost sight of it."³⁶ ~~XX~~

As DCI and chairman of USIB, McCone had some ostensibly neutral managerial tasks to perform in the NRP. He needed to ensure that no gaps in satellite coverage arose, that reconnaissance missions did not overload the Intelligence Community's capacity to interpret the imagery acquired, and that community components struck the right balance between refining existing programs and technologies and advancing the state of the art with new systems. He found that photointerpreters and analysts disagreed over

what camera resolution was needed to answer key intelligence questions and that scientists and engineers differed over how far photographic technology could be improved. In addition, a basic divergence existed between analysts, who concentrated on finding out what policymakers wanted or needed to know, and technical specialists, who focused on what a given system could best accomplish. McCone wanted community officers to reach a consensus on each issue so that, as DCI, he could work to rationalize technological research, production of satellites, and the conduct of reconnaissance missions. He sought a bottom-line conclusion on whether improved techniques really yielded better intelligence.³⁷ ~~XX~~

These decisions did not, and could not, occur in a political vacuum. McCone and his deputies—along with their counterparts elsewhere in the NRP—did not always subordinate narrow interests to the broader task of improving US strategic reconnaissance capabilities. Bureaucratic chauvinism and personal discord kept the key players at CIA and the Department of Defense from compromising at the policy level and interfered with the lower-level management of current programs and decisionmaking on future systems. During 1963–65 especially, these interwoven controversies involving institutions, technological goals, management authority, and personal prerogatives threatened to impair the NRP's ability to meet US intelligence requirements. McCone regarded the row as one of the low points of his tenure as DCI, calling it "confusing...and absolutely disgusting." At his last staff meeting as DCI, he expressed regret at "not having done more to fix the NRO problem"—without conceding how much he had contributed to it.³⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone's suspicion about the Air Force's intentions was probably a product of his not-always-pleasant experience as the service's under secretary during 1950–51. As DCI, he rarely disguised his disdain for the Air Force bureaucracy. "I have lived with this thing...since 1947, and I know how this thing works, and I am just not going to be satisfied with it,"

³⁶ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 1326–27; transcript of McCone meeting with Brockway McMillan (Director, NRO) on 27 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; CIA memorandum, "DCI Views on NRO Matters," 4 March 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 428–31; Cline/McAuliffe OH, 4. The most complete unofficial account of the creation of NRO and CIA's conflict with it is Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Civilians, Spies, and Blue Suits: The Bureaucratic War for Control of Overhead Reconnaissance," on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/monograph/nro/. See also Richelson, "Undercover in Outer Space: The Creation and Evolution of the NRO, 1960–1963," *IJIC* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 301–44; idem, *The Wizards of Langley*, chap. 4; and R. Cargill Hall, "Interagency Dynamics and Organizational Myths," *Studies* 46, no. 2 (2002): 21–28. A good overview of the space policy context within which the satellite programs functioned is Paul B. Stares, *The Militarization of Space*, chaps. 3–5. ~~XX~~

³⁷ Elder untitled memorandum about meeting with McCone on 30 June 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 347. ~~XX~~

³⁸ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 95; McCone memorandum of meeting with Bundy on 11 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; transcript of McCone meeting with PFIAB members on 2 March 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 8; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 1; Wheelon ~~XX~~ OH, 37. The various agencies' institutional views of the conflict are summarized in Dwayne A. Day, "Rashomon in Space: A Short Review of Official Spy Satellite Histories," *Quest* 8, no. 2 (2000): 45–53. ~~XX~~

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he told a senior Pentagon official at one point. Despite his first-hand knowledge, however, it was not always clear in the fight over the NRP whom McCone regarded as his opponent. When he criticized "the Air Force," he did not indicate whether he meant the Air Force as a separate military branch; the "blue" Air Force, particularly SAC; the "black" Air Force, the Special Projects Office that NRO oversaw; the director of NRO in his capacity as under secretary of the Air Force; or the Air Force as a stalking horse for the whole Pentagon and the threat of military control of all space intelligence programs. Moreover, McCone's comments during the dispute do not convey an awareness of conflicts within the Air Force between the bomber and missile factions, or between the "blue" and "black" elements, disputes he might have exploited to win supporters in the Air Force or among sympathetic civilian defense officials. Perhaps in talking about an "Air Force takeover" of satellite reconnaissance, McCone was just employing a convenient shorthand, or minimizing or ignoring nuances to make his adversary seem more formidable. In some respects, he seemed uncharacteristically misinformed about specific CIA-Air Force relationships in the satellite programs, and he might have misinterpreted the omission of references to the Agency in Pentagon directives about the NRP as signals that the military planned to force CIA off the field. Overall, these obfuscations and misconceptions, coupled with McCone's occasional tactlessness, made his position toward NRO seem intemperate and intransigent.³⁹ ~~XX~~

By the time McCone became DCI, the Air Force was working to establish itself as the preeminent player in space

intelligence by developing its own reconnaissance satellite (SAMOS) and an orbiting early warning platform (MIDAS).⁴⁰ From its perspective, the Air Force saw much more at stake in the NRO controversy than control of a single program. It was fighting for a primary mission. The manned bomber was losing importance in the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles; NASA had been assigned a coequal role in space; and the first NRP directive in September 1961 formalized CIA's responsibilities in satellite reconnaissance. Having made an enormous investment in space activities already, the Air Force was reluctant to lose more ground, especially to a nonmilitary agency whose extended involvement in this area had not been anticipated. As McCone later viewed the problem, "the Air Force, having suffered from being removed from any space activities except military [ones]...had to scoop up everything they could...and one of the things was to become a single instrument in this [overhead reconnaissance] field." The Air Force maintained, however, that because it was providing 80 percent of the resources for CORONA and had managed most of the program's development and operations, it should run the project as part of a military-dominated NRP. The service also resented the efforts of McCone and Wheelon to preserve CIA's independence in developing and using new systems while obliging the Air Force to pay for most of the research and administration. "The bright folks" at CIA would come up with the ideas, a high-ranking Agency official remarked, "and then...you hand them over to the blue-suits, where the treasury is...." Working to the Air Force's advantage was the Kennedy administration's post-Bay of Pigs disillusionment with CIA management—especially

³⁹ Author's conversation with NRO historian R. Cargill Hall, 10 and 11 June 1998; R. Cargill Hall, "Civil-Military Relations in America's Early Space Program," in R. Cargill Hall and Jacob Neufeld, eds., *The U.S. Air Force in Space*, 11; Robert L. Perry, *Management of the National Reconnaissance Program, 1960-1965*, 18, 36; National Reconnaissance Office, *The CORONA Story*, 71-72; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with McMillan on 27 October 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4; Department of Defense Directive 5105.23, "National Reconnaissance Office," 27 March 1964, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 8. ~~XX~~

The rivalry between the "blue" and "black" Air Force was institutionalized in 1960, when, acting on instructions from President Eisenhower, Secretary of the Air Force Dudley C. Sharp established a new satellite project office with a direct line of authority to the service's under secretary and secretary, bypassing the Air Staff. When the Special Projects Office (SPO) was created to manage all Air Force satellite programs, it remained entirely outside the service's regular chain of command. Its employees viewed themselves as members of a Department of Defense organization first and as Air Force officers second. SPO was so insulated operationally that when it was mentioned at one of Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuckert's staff meetings, he snappishly called it "Charyk's Air Force"—referring to the service under secretary, Joseph Charyk, who oversaw it. The service's chief of staff disparagingly referred to SPO as "that Hollywood Air Force" (alluding to its location in Los Angeles), and much of the Air Staff looked on the "black" Air Force as a group of dissidents under CIA influence. Perry *Management of the NRO*, ix, 65; Day, "Rashomon in Space," 49. McCone showed little appreciation of these attitudes, in part because his stint at the Pentagon predated the satellite programs. To him, there was only one Air Force. For purposes of literary convenience in this discussion, "Air Force" will mean the "black" element of the service—in NRP parlance, "Program A"—unless otherwise indicated. (U)

⁴⁰ SAMOS (originally named SENTRY) represented about 90 percent of the Air Force's space mission by the early 1960s. (The acronym is popularly, but incorrectly, thought to mean "Satellite and Missile Observation System." Actually it is the name of a Greek island.) The program sought to develop several different systems, including one that would send imagery to earth using technology similar to that which newspapers employed to transmit photographs electronically, and another that would return film capsules, as did CORONA. When SAMOS and MIDAS (Missile Defense Alarm System) ran into serious technical and administrative difficulties during 1960-63—SAMOS imagery was no clearer than that obtainable from low-flying aircraft, and seven of the first eight MIDAS missions failed—the Air Force became more determined to contest CIA's role in space reconnaissance. During the same period, McNamara proposed that the Air Force take over the Gemini manned space flight program from NASA. Author's conversation with R. Cargill Hall, 10 August 1998; Dwayne A. Day, "The Development and Improvement of the CORONA Satellite," in *Eye in the Sky*, 71-74, 78, 258 n. 104; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 94-95; Curtis Peebles, *Guardians: Strategic Reconnaissance Satellites*, 306-11; Jeffrey T. Richelson, *America's Space Sentinels*, 234-44; Howard Simons, "Our Fantastic Eye in the Sky," *Washington Post*, 8 December 1963, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, HIC. (U)

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Richard Bissell, who ran CORONA in tandem with Under Secretary of the Air Force Joseph Charyk. With the White House questioning whether the Agency could administer that vital program, the Air Force had a reason and an opportunity to take it over.⁴¹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone also had to consider—although to a lesser degree than with the Air Force—other services' interests in space reconnaissance. The Army was developing a mapping satellite (ARGON) for targeting purposes and wanted more CORONA payloads dedicated to that purpose. Meanwhile, the Navy wanted to launch more of the GRAB (Galactic Radiation and Background) satellites and its successors to collect ELINT on Soviet air defense systems. The record does not indicate whether McCone considered an alliance with those branches against the Air Force. At one point, he directed that mapping must never take priority over intelligence collection in setting launch schedules. The Army and the Navy got around that problem by using their own rockets (the Redstone and Vanguard, respectively). Lastly, all NRP principals had to take into account the private sector's accomplishments with communications satellites: AT&T's Telstar (1962) and the Hughes Corporation's Syncom (1963), both of which received funding from NASA and the Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency.⁴² ~~SECRET~~

McCone's limited authority over the Intelligence Community complicated his and CIA's standing in the interdepartmental feud. The DCI did not have the final say over all intelligence matters, regardless of the power he believed President Kennedy had given him in early 1962. He had to share responsibility for space reconnaissance with the Department of Defense. Under the first NRP agreement (NRP-1) in September 1961, which created NRO, the under secretary of the Air Force and the DDP jointly man-

aged "all satellite and overflight reconnaissance projects whether overt or covert," while NRO responded to intelligence requirements that USIB laid down. NRP-1, which PFIAB's Killian and Land encouraged, codified the loose, collegial relationship that Charyk and Bissell had used to run CORONA so effectively. Their guidance was vague; they were to "ensure that the particular talents, experience, and capabilities within the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency are fully and most effectively utilized...." As subsequent events showed, individuals made all the difference in the interpretation of that language. Bissell's departure and Scoville's problems at the new DR, which handled CIA's participation in the NRP, made the agreement unworkable.⁴³ (U)

Chafing Under New Rules (U)

In May 1962, McCone and Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, acquaintances since McCone's time at the Pentagon, signed a second NRP agreement (NRP-2).⁴⁴ The DCI's goal, he wrote, was "that the Agency, because of its flexibility, be kept in the picture at all times and not merely brought in by sufferance or when and as desired by [the Department of] Defense." ~~SECRET~~



McCone achieved much of what he wanted. NRP-2 more clearly enumerated the administrative and budgetary authority of NRO and established a single NRO director (DNRO) to be appointed by the secretary of defense and

⁴¹ Gerald K. Haines, *The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)*, 19; Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 86–87; William E. Burrows, *Deep Black: Space Espionage and National Security*, 87–88, 196, 201; Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 44–46, Peebles, *Guardians*, 61–65, 70–71, 306–11; Stares, 61–62; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 23–26; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 70–71; Robert L. Perry, "A History of Satellite Reconnaissance: Volume I—CORONA," unpublished manuscript prepared for the NRO (1973), 142–43; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 8; Carter-Knoche OH, 33; transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11. ~~SECRET~~

Air Force mission-building carried over from satellites into aircraft reconnaissance. Arguing that CIA's cover for the U-2 Cuban overflight program was weak, it succeeded in taking over the flights during the Cuban missile crisis. McCone kept CIA control of overflights of other denied areas. The Air Force also was getting its own version of CIA's supersonic spyplane, assuring competition for that mission as well. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 207; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara on 8 January 1963, and "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities, 3 January 1963," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum dated 4 June 1963 about various discussions with Gilpatric, and McCone letter to Gilpatric, 11 June 1963, [redacted] vol. 4, Appendix D, tabs 27 and 30; Carter letter to Eugene Fubini (Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering), 20 August 1963, *ibid.*, tab 40. ~~SECRET~~

⁴² McCone letter to Fubini, 6 October 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1409; Joseph V. Charyk oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 5 December 1984 (hereafter Charyk [redacted] OH), 2, 12; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 46, 49–50, 82, 86; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 21; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 139; Naval Research Laboratory, *GRAB: Galactic Radiation and Background: First Reconnaissance Satellite*; GRAB information on Naval Research Laboratory Web site www.nrl.navy.mil; Dwayne A. Day, "Listening from Above: The First Signals Intelligence Satellite," *Spaceflight* 41, no. 8 (August 1999): 338–46; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 363–66; Joan Lisa Bromberg, *NASA and the Space Industry*, 46–56. The ARGON program had seven successful missions out of 12 attempted between February 1961 and August 1964, when it was ended. [redacted] ~~SECRET~~

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the DCI. The "letter" programs—A (Air Force satellites), B (CORONA), C (Navy satellites), and D (aerial reconnaissance)—were organized, with DDR Scoville running Program B. To the dismay of some senior Agency executives, NRO would control all spending on satellite reconnaissance, including funds previously in the CIA budget. McCone agreed to that provision to allay congressional concerns about CIA's swelling "black" expenditures. In exchange, the DCI demanded assurances that the Agency would continue to control research, development, and contracting of covert reconnaissance programs and that only USIB, which he chaired, would set requirements for the satellites. ~~X~~

McCone had not liked what he termed the "two-headed" leadership under NRP-1 and consented to having Joseph Charyk selected as the first DNRO. He believed he could trust Charyk, whom he called "unusually capable," to protect CIA's equities. They both considered reconnaissance satellites as national intelligence assets that should not be controlled by a military branch for targeting purposes. The new agreement did not provide for a deputy director because Charyk thought having one would



Joseph Charyk (U)

create an unnecessary layer of management. Absence of the position deprived CIA of a senior representative at NRO. Some Agency managers saw the deficiency as a Pentagon ploy to ease CIA out of the NRP. The overall executive agent of the space reconnaissance program, the DNRO, still came from the Department of Defense and was not truly a half-subordinate of the DCI. McCone presumably believed he could offset the concessions he made through his good relations with Gilpatric and Charyk, his leverage as USIB chairman, and the responsibilities he retained for CIA. ~~X~~⁴⁵

Although the Agency retained management of CORONA, McCone and Scoville soon perceived that the NRP was biased toward the Pentagon's preferences. McCone had preferred that the DNRO serve as a "chairman of the board" of the reconnaissance community and preside, without delving into operational details, over several "companies" that built and launched their own satellites. Instead, the DNRO—as under secretary of the Air Force—was functioning as the NRP's "chief executive officer," managing the letter programs as if they were line offices. At the same time, he kept reporting directly to the secretary of defense, his organizational superior. Adding to the confusion was the role of the DDR, the Agency's representative in the NRP. As head of Program B, nominally administered under the NRP, Scoville nevertheless still reported to the DCI, his boss at CIA. Although the senior military officers who led the other NRP programs might have thought this situation benefited CIA—unlike them, the DDR had direct access to a Cabinet-level official—McCone thought the arrangement bred inefficiency and unproductive rivalry. He suggested to

⁴³ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 143–45, for the terms of NRP-1, signed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric and DDCI Charles P. Cabell. See also Gilpatric's letter to Dulles, 6 September 1961, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 5. The basic division of labor that Bissell and Charyk worked out on the CORONA project went so: the CIA handled the funds for the covert projects, procured the cameras and recovery vehicles, and provided most of the security; the Air Force built and launched the rockets, and retrieved the payloads. Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 17. Dwayne Day concisely captures the "neither fish nor fowl" character of NRO that was the source of so much of the controversy described herein:

[NRO] was not a distinct entity in itself. Officially, it was a civilian office located in the Department of Defense and headed by a civilian Air Force secretary who also had Air Force responsibilities as well. But it was composed of a combination of offices belonging to other organizations, primarily CIA and the Air Force, and its Pentagon headquarters was staffed primarily by Air Force officers. The Director of NRO during the early years had only limited authority over his organization. Because of his Air Force title, he had greater control over the Air Force component of the NRO, known as Program A and located in Los Angeles. The CIA component of NRO, known as Program B and located at CIA headquarters, was more directly responsive to the CIA's Deputy [Director] for Science and Technology than to the [DNRO].

Day, "Rashomon in Space," 46. (U)

⁴⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: [redacted] vol. 2, chap. 5; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 21–22; Charyk, [redacted] OH, 8; [redacted] "The View from the CIA: The Development, Management, and Exploitation of Satellite Reconnaissance," unpublished manuscript (1990), 41–46; idem, "CIA and NRO," 28; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 67–70, 73–75, 90–91; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 11, 27, 31–35, 149–52; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 147; McCone memorandum (dated 3 January 1962) about meeting with Gilpatric and Charyk on 28 December 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder memorandum (dated 2 July 1962) about CIA meeting with Bureau of the Budget on 29 June 1962, *ibid.*, folder 2; McCone memorandum (dated 15 December 1962) about meeting with Gilpatric on 14 December 1962, *ibid.*, folder 3; R. Cargill Hall letter to author, 7 October 1998. ~~X~~

⁴⁵ McCone had different working relationships with McNamara and Gilpatric. Gilpatric recalled that McNamara "didn't like to deal with McCone unless he had to, because McCone was another very strong-minded person who wasn't going to easily be overridden by the Secretary of Defense. But with McCone, McNamara just left it up to me. I'd worked for McCone, knew him very well, and we'd just...sit down and negotiate...a modus vivendi." Gilpatric oral history interview, 1970, JFK Library, 91. Wheelon has claimed that McCone's willingness to compromise with Gilpatric, particularly on budget issues, sent the wrong signal to the Pentagon. Wheelon, [redacted] OH, 20; Wheelon, "CORONA: A Triumph of American Technology," in *Eye in the Sky*, 41. (U)

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McNamara that the only way to clear up the bureaucratic muddle was to remove NRO from the purview of the under secretary of the Air Force and put it under either the deputy secretary of defense for research and engineering or create a new position, assistant secretary of defense for intelligence. McNamara responded positively, but nothing came of McCone's ideas at that time. ~~X~~

To justify the Agency's position, McCone questioned the ability of the Air Force's Program A office and NRO to develop and deploy satellite reconnaissance systems. He pointed out that Air Force rockets were responsible for most CORONA launch failures and that the service had not been able to develop the SAMOS. He again raised the "competency" argument in mid-1963, soon after a series of booster rocket mishaps caused an alarming interruption in satellite intelligence collection. "We had these failures," he told the Pentagon's chief of research and engineering,

for the simple reason that the people that were running that operation were not thoroughly aware of how serious a failure was from the standpoint of the mission. Sure, they hated to see a satellite fail because they were in the business of making satellites succeed, but they didn't realize [redacted]

"[T]he importance of this type of intelligence to our national security cannot be over-emphasized," McCone chastised the DNRO, "and it is essential that there be no repetition of the hiatus in this type of coverage such as has existed for the past three months." He also accused McNamara and Gilpatric of being "entirely preoccupied" with defending weapons systems on Capitol Hill instead of managing the complex space intelligence program. ~~X~~

McCone tried a couple of bureaucratic maneuvers in late 1962 to secure CIA's independence from NRO. First, he proposed to McNamara that NRP-2 be revised by the cre-

ation of a "National Reconnaissance Planning Group," consisting of the DCI and the secretary of defense, with authority to make final decisions on aspects of space reconnaissance that did not require presidential assent. Under this plan, the DNRO would only have review and approval authority over the whole NRP budget but not over individual programs. CIA would have total management responsibility for Program B (CORONA), from the DCI level on down. Charyk and Gilpatric balked at McCone's idea, so the DCI took another tack. He asked McNamara to recommend that the Bureau of the Budget release directly to CIA all funds required to run covert satellite projects. He knew that if the Agency controlled its own reconnaissance pursuits, the precise place it occupied in the NRP wiring diagram would be largely irrelevant. Again Charyk objected. "[I]f NRO is to function," he wrote to Gilpatric, "it must be responsible for continuous monitoring of financial and technical program status, must control the release of funds to programs, and must be able to reallocate [funds] between NRP programs." McNamara did not act on McCone's request, so CIA continued using funds from non-NRP sources for Program B activities—which Charyk believed went outside established procedures and probably violated the law. McCone argued to PFIAB, however, that the DNRO could not have fiscal control over Program B because Congress appropriated those funds to CIA through the committees to which the Agency was responsible. Budgetary accountability would be lost if NRO had its way. He further claimed (to Gilpatric) that Air Force budget officers had used their authority to frustrate CIA activities in aerial reconnaissance, implying that they would do the same with satellite projects. The funding problem could be solved, he suggested later, if the same congressional subcommittees dealt with both CIA's and the Pentagon's portions of the NRP. ~~X~~

McCone and Gilpatric, with input from Charyk, tried to address the shortcomings of NRP-2 through a third agreement in March 1963. NRP-3 established a deputy director of NRO position to be filled by a CIA officer;⁴⁸ gave both the DCI and secretary of defense responsibility for manag-

⁴⁶ Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 148-49; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 94; transcript of McCone conversation with Fubini, 22 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4. ~~X~~

⁴⁷ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 43-44; Kirkpatrick memoranda, "DCI Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 7 December 1962" and "Briefing of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board by the Director of Central Intelligence...8 March 1963," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone memorandum about discussion with Gilpatric on 14 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. ~~X~~

⁴⁸ Scoville nominally was DDNRO for 10 weeks, but Eugene Kiefer of the DS&T's OSA became the first true incumbent in July 1963. Kiefer, educated as an aeronautical engineer, had designed reconnaissance aircraft during World War II. Unlike Scoville, Kiefer occupied the Pentagon office to which he was entitled. Outranked and isolated within NRO, and with McCone and Wheelon making the important decisions affecting CIA, he never became a significant figure in NRP affairs and asked to be reassigned after one year. [redacted] vol. 2, 219, 266-67; [redacted] CIA and the NRO," 41; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 58-59, 82, 97-98. ~~X~~

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ing the NRP; but designated the latter as the program's executive agent with ultimate responsibility for NRO. Charyk's handiwork showed where the authority of NRO and its director was strengthened. The agreement referred to "a single NRP," made NRO an operating agency of the Department of Defense, and gave the DNRO authority to "assign all project tasks such as technical management, contracting, etc., to appropriate elements of the DOD and CIA, changing such assignments and taking any such steps he may determine necessary to the efficient management of the NRP"—including not consulting CIA in those areas at his discretion. At the same time, CIA retained budget and operational authority over Program B. (McCone may have negotiated some changes with Gilpatric after Charyk left; when PFIAB asked if he was satisfied with the text, he replied that he "had written it himself.") In a separate funding agreement that McCone and Gilpatric signed in April, the DNRO received control over most of the NRP budget, but spending on "black" projects had to go through CIA's procurement process. Although McCone felt some satisfaction from the new agreements, PFIAB took NRO's side by advising the president that the Pentagon should more thoroughly manage all overhead reconnaissance programs. McCone responded that making the Department of Defense the exclusive agent of the NRP would mean a "loss of responsibility and imaginativeness which exists in CIA and which has made many valuable contributions in the [satellite] field...."⁴⁹ ~~X~~

Fighting Executives (U)

In June 1962, PFIAB made this comment about the power of personal ties in making the NRP work properly: "The actual structure of the document...is inadequate to support an efficient organization when the present experienced and distinguished group moves on to other tasks." The board could hardly have been more prescient. Long-standing animosity between "Bud" Wheelon and Brockway McMillan, Charyk's successor as under secretary of the Air Force and DNRO, carried over into the interdepartmental dispute and further damaged relations between their superiors at CIA and the Department of Defense.⁵⁰ (U)

Both men were on the scene by late summer 1963. McMillan—nicknamed "Break-away" by his staff—came to the Pentagon in June 1961 from Bell Telephone Laboratories. He had been assistant secretary of the Air Force for research and development before his elevation. He insisted that NRO had received full management authority over space reconnaissance and was determined to break CIA's hold on designing and procuring broad-search satellites. In McMillan's mind, a truly national reconnaissance effort could not exist if CIA held custody of one of the major programs (CORONA) and could spend its NRP funds as it chose. He proceeded to undercut Scoville, with whom he had served on Killian's Technological Capabilities Panel in the mid-1950s, and then took on the DDS&T after the embittered DDR left. McMillan and Wheelon—both smart, strong-willed, prideful, and ambitious—let an old disagreement about a technical subject grow into a personal feud that distorted their perspective on the bureaucratic controversy. If anything, Wheelon was even blunter (and occasionally more off the mark) than McCone in characterizing it:



Brockway McMillan (U)

The Air Force objective—as repeatedly stated by General LeMay—is to eliminate CIA from all reconnaissance operations.... If exploited, the present NRO agreement provides the enabling legislation by which CIA can be so eliminated...[The DNRO] has come to be identified with the Under Secretary of the Air Force, thereby posing an unparalleled conflict of interest question...The DNRO considers his decision on program allocation or reassignment final, and states that their challenge is unacceptable.

The new DDS&T's declared intention was to "get CIA into the satellite business in a contributing, not just a bureaucratic, way." He got himself into the business more directly after November 1963, when McCone made him the

⁴⁹ Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 23; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 92; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 53–57; Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone briefing of PFIAB on 8 March 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01029R, box 8, folder 140; "Agreement Between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on Management of the National Reconnaissance Program," 13 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9. As with NRP-2, McCone agreed to keep CIA's money for its reconnaissance programs in the NRP budget as an accounting procedure. He did not regard that step as a relinquishment of authority over those programs. ~~X~~

⁵⁰ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 39. Charyk had received an offer from the Comsat Corporation in December 1962, and his plans to leave the US government were known soon after. Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 64. (U)

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Agency's day-to-day representative in NRP matters (replacing DDCI Carter, who assumed high-level duties in the program). McMillan, in turn, was convinced that Wheelon had fomented all the interdepartmental discord to grab power and perpetuate a grudge.⁵¹ ~~SECRET~~

McCone and McMillan quickly replicated the acrimony, fighting over contracts, budgets, and delegation, and nearly brought the NRP to a halt. Walter Elder recalled McCone accusing McMillan of "lying...deceit and fraud," while the DNRO thought the DCI was "aggressive and not entirely trustworthy." McCone admonished McMillan for being too obedient to the Pentagon, turning the NRP into a "hand-maiden" of the Air Force, failing to include CIA in decision-making, and giving priority to development projects over intelligence collection. He asserted that McMillan could not properly manage NRO while serving simultaneously as under secretary of the Air Force and called one of the DNRO's management proposals "damned foolishness." He refused to let other NRO departments use the Agency's covert procurement channels out of concern not only for security, but also to keep CIA from turning into a "support organization" for the Pentagon. ~~SECRET~~

McMillan was not an Air Force "shill," however. He later said he never considered turning over the NRP to that service because he did not think he could rely on the Air Staff to make it work. He told McNamara in late 1963 that, in contrast to CORONA, the SAMOS project "was ill-considered, undisciplined, and poorly managed. It would have, at best, floundered into success at a much later date." McMillan saw himself caught in the crossfire between CIA and the "blue" and "black" Air Forces and believed that only the DNRO had the broad vision to run space reconnaissance programs in the national interest. "I believe in a strong

NRO. I do not believe that either CIA or the military are capable of accepting effectively an autonomous responsibility. Both need the discipline of a central problem-oriented management." As former NRO historian Gerald Haines has noted:

In this fight, McMillan and his NRO staff stood virtually alone in attempting to defend the authorities of the NRO. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and most of the Department of Defense were preoccupied with Vietnam. The regular Air Force totally ignored space activities. The Air Force Space Systems [Command] and Air Staff were still smarting from being excluded from most satellite developments. Even [the Special Projects Office of Program A] took a limited interest. Located in Los Angeles, [Program A] officers concerned themselves solely with operations. They saw their role as strictly "birding" (launching and operating satellites). Future systems were not their concern. Nor was politics. They saw politics as strictly a function of their "Washington branch." ~~SECRET~~

McCone did not accept McMillan's self-portrayal or sympathize with his bureaucratic plight. As he watched NRP-3 being implemented, he saw NRO being transformed from an interdepartment management and planning office into a Pentagon line organization taking operational responsibility away from CIA. After months of futile bickering, he complained to Deputy Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Eugene Fubini:

I never knew the first damn thing that's going on. I have yet to see the [NRO's] budget. [The NRP agreement] just isn't functioning at all as I anticipated in any respect and as near as I can see the whole thing is

⁵¹ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 70, 78; [redacted] vol. 2, 246-49; Scoville memorandum to Carter, "Recent DD/R Problems with the DOD," 21 January 1963, *ibid.*, vol. 4, Appendix D, tab 12; McCone memoranda about meetings with Bundy on 10 January 1963 and with McNamara and Gilpatric on 22 March 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folders 4 and 5; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 22-23; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 6-7, 10; Wheelon memorandum, "DDS&T View on NRO Problem," 22 August 1963, DS&T Files, Job 66R00546R, box 1, folder 8; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, "Monitorship of National Reconnaissance Activities," 6 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 3, folder 1. ~~SECRET~~

Richard Bissell recalled Wheelon's—and, by extension, McCone's—conflict with McMillan and the "black" Air Force this way:

Bud Wheelon, essentially, was battling to maintain the [A]gency's influence in the reconnaissance programs, and also to have the [A]gency designated by the NRO as the procurement agency for a lot of the payloads. The Air Force was battling for the exact opposite. They wanted to do as much as possible of the procurement and have as much influence as possible on the technical decisions and operational matters. And that was really the essence of Bud's continuing battles. What kind of programs will receive what kind of funding? Who will be the procurement agency for this or that? And [the battles] went on, and on, and on....

Burrows, 199-200. (U)

McMillan and Wheelon's mutual animosity originated when McMillan, as editor of a physics journal, rejected an article Wheelon submitted while at MIT. According to McMillan, the article began in a boastful tone and contained a serious error; Wheelon believed the evaluation was unfair and uninformed. At first, McCone did not know that their feud went back so far or was so deeply personal. When the DCI criticized McMillan for injecting personal issues into the debate, the DNRO replied, "if you knew Bud Wheelon as well as I do, you would know why I started...." Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 103; Taubman, 345; Brockway McMillan oral history interview by Gerald K. Haines, Winter Harbor, ME, 15 November 1996, videotape in NRO History Office (hereafter McMillan/Haines OH); Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10. ~~SECRET~~

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moving ever and ever closer and closer into becoming an instrument of the Air Force.

Telling McMillan that "left in the hands of the Air Force, [reconnaissance satellites] would not be taking a picture of the Soviet Union today," McCone threatened to see the secretary of defense and the president about getting the DNRO removed unless matters changed to his liking. Short of that, he tried (without success) to have McMillan made a member of USIB, where, as chairman, McCone could exert more influence over NRO through the Committee on Reconnaissance.⁵² ~~XX~~

Interagency relations seemed to improve in January 1964, when McCone agreed to Fubini's compromise proposal under which CIA would be responsible for research, development, engineering, and early flights of new reconnaissance payloads and then would turn over their operation to the Air Force.⁵³ The DCI and the secretary of defense (through the DNRO) would share authority over the NRP. However much the feuding executives agreed in principle on the need for change, they could not put that sentiment into practice. Wheelon persuaded McCone that it



Eugene Fubini (U)

would be unwise to stake CIA's entire future role in satellite reconnaissance on its ability to develop a single second generation system. A more sensible division of labor, he suggested, would put CIA in charge of all broad-coverage systems and give the Air Force responsibility for close-look satellites. McMillan seemed to agree, telling McNamara that "the final price of peace with the CIA, considering the temperament of its leaders, at least is to give them carte blanche for the development of a new general search system." The Agency's lack of fiscal autonomy in the NRP precluded that scheme, however, as did McMillan's reluctance to make deals based on undeveloped technologies. ~~XX~~

On more than one occasion, McCone unleashed his formidable temper in frustration over his lack of authority to resolve these bureaucratic battles. He told Fubini that he was "just about ready to tell the Secretary of Defense and the President [that] they can take NRO and shove it.... [M]y patience is gone!" In a contentious meeting with McMillan, McCone called the latter's failure to include Agency officers in the investigation of recent CORONA failures "criminal" and said the DNRO was "just grabbing for power...you don't want to work with people—all you want to do is say, 'Give it to me and the hell with you.'" To Edwin Land, he vented his frustration over government bureaucracies:

Hell! I was the Director of the Standard Oil of California and we had no problems of this type with that company. I was also Director of Caltex, which is

⁵² Sources for the above three paragraphs are: McCone untitled memorandum, 3 June 1963, [redacted] vol. 4, Appendix D, tab 25; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 22 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 September 1963, *ibid.*, folder 5; transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 7 June 1963, *ibid.*, folder 4; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 7; McCone memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 11 February 1964, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 10 December 1963, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 17 August 1963, *ibid.*, folder 5; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 16 October 1963, *ibid.*, folder 6; McCone memorandum, "Problems Relating to the National Reconnaissance Organization Plan and its Implementation...", 20 August 1963, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 9; McCone untitled memorandum to McNamara, 23 September 1963, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 1, folder 24; McMillan/Haines OH; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10-11; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 22-24; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 19-20, 52; Gerald K. Haines, "Critical to US Security: Development of the [redacted] Satellite Reconnaissance System," unpublished manuscript (1997), 9; [redacted] CIA and the NRO," 35, 39. ~~XX~~

Inadequate, often nonexistent, record keeping contributed to acrimony among NRP principals. They held many meetings at which no minutes were kept and no assistants were present, and often no agenda was circulated ahead of time. These lapses caused confusion and misconceptions about what the attendees had agreed to or disagreed about. They and their deputies often acted on their own interpretations of what transpired at conferences and did not coordinate with other involved departments. Memoranda written by different principals describing the same meetings reveal the parochialism that distorted their perceptions and affected their ability to recount events. ~~XX~~

⁵³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 79-81; transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 13 January 1964 and Fubini's accompanying memorandum, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; transcript of McCone-Fubini telephone conversation on 13 February 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 420-21; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 11 February 1964, *ibid.*, folder 7; McCone memorandum about meeting with Gilpatric and Vance on 14 January 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 11 February 1964, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 10; transcript of McCone-McMillan-Fubini-Wheelon meeting on 26 June 1964, and transcript of McCone-Land-Wheelon meeting on 25 June 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 7; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "Recommendation re Fubini's Proposal," 3 February 1964, National Reconnaissance Office, CORONA-ARGON-LANYARD Declassified Files Collection, cabinet 1, drawer C, folder 67, document number 1400022840, FOIA Reading Room, NRO Headquarters, Chantilly, VA (documents from this collection will be cited hereafter in this form: NRO CAL 1/C/0067, no. 1400022840). Fubini was McMillan's strongest Pentagon ally in the CIA-NRO dispute. McCone thought he was "volatile and in matters of management not always...thoroughly sound." Transcript of McCone-Gilpatric telephone conversation, 13 January 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 411. ~~XX~~

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owned jointly by the Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company, and there the Directors spent all their time on allocating responsibilities: [W]ho's going to be responsible for the sales in France.... Who's going to be responsible for the next group of tankers? I can tell you in the six companies when we built the Boulder Dam, this is what we had to do: who is going to be responsible for the gravel plant, is it going to be Kaiser, is it going to be Shay? This is the kind of thing that the Directors of the six companies had to deal with. Wherever you've got an integrated company you don't have that problem. Management can handle the problem. ~~XX~~

PFIAB waded into the controversy with an investigation, begun in March 1964 and completed in May. Much to the consternation of McCone, who viewed the board's monitoring as irritating and superfluous, it did not reach the conclusions he wanted.⁵⁴ "The National Reconnaissance Program, despite its achievements, has not yet reached its full potential," the panel reported, due to "inadequacies in organizational structure" that provided no clear division of responsibility between the Pentagon, NRO, CIA, and the DCI. Although PFIAB acknowledged that the DCI needed to have a "large and important role" in space reconnaissance matters—especially in establishing requirements and exploiting collected intelligence—it recommended that the secretary of defense be designated the executive agent of the NRP, with "responsibility for the management, overall systems engineering, procurement and operation of all satellite reconnaissance systems." NRO should function as an operating agency of the Department of Defense, with the DNRO continuing to serve as under secretary of the Air Force and accountable solely to the secretary of defense. The NRP budget should be consolidated and centrally administered, and members of the NRO staff (including detailees) should work directly and fully for the DNRO.⁵⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone grumbled that PFIAB's recommendations would relegate the DCI's role "maybe to be advised about something someplace along the line." As USIB chairman, he might be in charge of setting collection requirements, but if the secretary of defense managed the whole satellite pro-

gram, the DCI's role would be "absolutely meaningless." If launch schedules slipped for technical or other reasons, how could requirements be met, and who would be held accountable? McCone also believed that implementing the board's main recommendation, a presidential directive ordering centralization of the NRP, would reduce the space reconnaissance program to "a single instrument resting with the Air Force." He countered with his own proposals that assigned program decisions to the DCI and secretary of defense (his earlier National Reconnaissance Planning Group idea) and placed the DNRO organizationally under the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in a manner similar to NSA. ~~XX~~



Cyrus Vance (U)

Over the summer, McCone discussed his ideas with McGeorge Bundy, McNamara, and Gilpatric's replacement as deputy secretary of defense, Cyrus Vance. They all supported his general position—including Vance, who initially endorsed the PFIAB recommendations. McNamara and his new deputy secretary, however, had reservations about potential bureaucratic and political fallout from McCone's

specific suggestions.⁵⁶ ~~XX~~

In any event, PFIAB's recommendations had no perceptible impact. No presidential directive and no Pentagon implementation orders were issued. Meanwhile, McCone grew more impatient over the impasse. "He says that if the straightening out of this matter requires a Presidential decision," wrote Marshall Carter, "he insists upon it and he insists upon it now. He is not going to see the CIA capability frittered away by fiat or by decisions at a lower level." Lacking White House intervention, McCone—perhaps more out of frustration than anything else—contemplated that "the whole reconnaissance operation be turned over to the Department of Defense, along with all the responsibilities and the dangers of such a decision."⁵⁷ (U)

⁵⁴ The previous June, PFIAB had appeared more critical of NRO. Edwin Land, in particular, was annoyed to learn that the NRO staff consisted almost entirely of Air Force personnel. ~~XX~~ vol. 2, 227–28. The influence of PFIAB's new chairman, Clark Clifford, with whom McCone did not get along, might have had something to do with the board taking a more critical stance toward CIA. The PFIAB committee that looked at the CIA-NRO problem was called the Baker Panel, named for William O. Baker of Bell Telephone Laboratories. He did not recuse himself from the inquiry despite his former association with McMillan. ~~XX~~

⁵⁵ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 82–83; ~~XX~~ vol. 2, 263–64; ~~XX~~ "CIA and the NRO," 43–45; PFIAB memorandum to President Johnson, "National Reconnaissance Program," 2 May 1964, *TRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 442–50. ~~XX~~

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Controlling CORONA (U)

These contretemps did not transpire only among deputy-level policymakers and department directors. They were fought out as well at upper management levels and in the field and affected the administration of current space reconnaissance programs and decisions about future systems. Control of CORONA—the most successful collection program in US intelligence history up to then—was the first prize in the CIA-NRO-Air Force battle royal. The initiative came from NRO and the “black” Air Force, which wanted to change the status quo; CIA at first sought to keep what responsibilities it already had. After difficulties with developing a follow-on satellite made it evident that CORONA was not going to be just an interim system, the contesting agencies became even more determined to either take or retain authority over the program. In CIA’s case, McCone and Wheelon sought to insulate the Agency’s CORONA activities more thoroughly from outside intervention—at times even of the sort envisioned under the various NRP agreements. From their vantage point, in Wheelon’s words, “there is no honorable way to lose this one.”⁵⁶ (U)

During early and mid-1963, when technical problems plagued the satellite programs, McMillan called for consolidating all of them under Program A to streamline management and resolve engineering and operational glitches quicker. “I am convinced,” he wrote, “that the Director, NRO Program A, because of the direct authority he has over the necessary Air Force resources, is the only one to whom I can reasonably assign this responsibility.” McMillan contended that he was following up his predecessor Charyk’s plan to put all satellite activities under one organization; there could be no community program if one department (CIA) monopolized one of its main elements. McCone parried that stroke by noting that the problems then being

encountered were with the Air Force’s rockets, not with CIA’s cameras. (That argument was persistent and persuasive; although not all the film returned from every mission was usable, there were no CORONA-series camera failures in 46 consecutive “shots” from July 1961 to November 1964.) The DCI also directed Carter and Wheelon to arrange for backup CORONA missions after he learned that the launch schedule for mid-1963 had slipped enough to jeopardize collection needed for upcoming estimates on Soviet strategic weapons.⁵⁷ ~~XX~~

Then, in late November 1963, McMillan proposed putting CIA’s CORONA contracting officer in California under the “management guidance” of the Air Force two-star general, Robert Greer, who ran Program A’s office there. Greer—who answered only to the DNRO—would have authority to make “minor changes and improvements” in CORONA and would determine the threshold between minor and major. McCone and Wheelon vigorously rejected the move. Program A’s failures with SAMOS offset its successes with CORONA, they argued. If anything, CIA’s record showed that it ought to be more involved in all CORONA activities. The DCI charged McMillan with wanting “to take the whole project over” and, the DNRO later said, warned that “he would not stand for submersion of this project into the bureaucracy of the Air Force and that he would liquidate NRO if necessary to prevent this.” In the meantime, McCone enjoined McMillan to leave things as they were. In early 1964, however, the DNRO directed that all changes in any NRP programs be referred to him; disbanded a separate Air Force liaison component with which CIA had dealt and required the Agency to communicate only with Program A managers; and seconded personnel from Program B to serve on two study groups run out of his office. Wheelon objected proprietarily that it was “inappro-

⁵⁶ Transcript of McCone-Fubini meeting on 19 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; McCone memoranda, “2 May President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on the NRO,” 1 June 1964, and “Evolution of the National Reconnaissance Organization and Certain Proposals...,” 17 June 1964, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 9; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara, 17 June 1964, *ibid.*; McCone memorandum dated 12 July 1964 about meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 12; Vance memorandum to Bundy, “Memorandum for the President, by the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, re National Reconnaissance Program,” 2 June 1964, and McCone memorandum to Bundy, “National Reconnaissance Program,” 11 June 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 454–59; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 83. Since at least late 1962, McCone had known that Bundy agreed with his overall perspective vis-à-vis NRO, and in mid-1963 the national security adviser told the DCI that he was not impressed with McMillan’s “competence and drive.” McCone memorandum about meeting with Bundy on 10 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum about NSC meeting on 31 July 1963, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 5. The political fallout Vance had in mind was “a possible flare-up by [the secretary of the Air Force, Eugene] Zuckert and [the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Curtis] LeMay which would be somewhat embarrassing, and furthermore McMillan would quit.” McCone memorandum (dated 12 July 1964) about meeting with Bundy and Vance on 9 July 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12. ~~XX~~

⁵⁷ Carter untitled memorandum, 31 July 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 467. (U)

⁵⁸ The feud over CORONA is described most thoroughly, albeit from an NRO perspective, in Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 74 *passim*. The Wheelon quote comes from his memorandum to McCone, “Final Report on CORONA Management,” 21 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0064, no. 1400022841. (U)

⁵⁹ Perry, “History of Satellite Reconnaissance,” 160; McMillan memorandum to Directors of Programs A and B, “Responsibility for the CORONA Project,” 1 May 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0039, no. 1400038980; McCone memorandum to Carter and Wheelon, “Satellite Reconnaissance Program,” 19 August 1963, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 19. ~~XX~~

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priate for the NRO Staff to be designating individuals in CIA for such purposes." Although NRP-3 made no such distinction, McMillan conceded the point. The Agency's CORONA officers had been taking instructions only from the DDS&T and the director of Program B for several months already, but this skirmish increased the separation between CIA's NRP personnel and the rest of NRO, as McCone and Wheelon wanted.⁶⁰ ~~XX~~

McCone and McMillan reached a seemingly unbreakable stalemate in mid-to-late 1964, when the DNRO tried to transfer CORONA's overall systems engineering contract from Lockheed to an Air Force-funded research center called Aerospace.⁶¹ After CORONA rockets failed in March and April of that year, USIB directed NRO to correct deficiencies in the program. McMillan interpreted that guidance broadly and concluded that the best way to rectify problems with CORONA was to change its systems engineering contractor. McCone initially concurred in late May, but he soon changed his mind after further reflection and advice from Wheelon, Carter, and other Agency executives. Three successful CORONA missions in early June indicated that Lockheed had taken care of specific technical flaws, and changing management teams then would be too disruptive—particularly when demands for satellite imagery of the Soviet Union and Communist China were increasing. McCone wanted no changes in contracts or procedures for

the time being. McMillan ordered the transfer anyway, citing "a decision that has been coordinated with the Secretary of Defense and Director, Central Intelligence." ~~XX~~

With that, McCone lost his patience. Claiming he was through trying to work with Fubini and McMillan, he went to McNamara and Vance to plead his case. He charged that the DNRO ignored intelligence considerations, did not communicate with the Agency or use the DDNRO meaningfully, "lacked integrity," and exhibited "an element of dishonesty [that] made him totally unsatisfactory." McNamara conceded that the DNRO's behavior in the contract affair was "indefensible" and at last agreed in principle with McCone's recommendation to take NRO out of the Air Force and make it a coordinating office rather than a line organization. He told McCone, however, that he would do nothing until after the November elections. McMillan temporarily backed down and suspended the contract transfer, but in August, Vance and Fubini sided with him against McCone, and Aerospace was designated as Lockheed's replacement.⁶² CIA remained in charge of the cameras and security for CORONA, but the Air Force's Program A office now had responsibility for overall systems engineering and contract integration. ~~XX~~

Further disagreement quickly arose between CIA and the Department of Defense over how far Aerospace's authority

⁶⁰ McNamara draft memorandum to McMillan, "Policy Guidance on Management Control over Reconnaissance Programs," 22 October 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0043, no. 1400038981; McMillan memorandum to McCone, "Management of the CORONA Project," 28 October 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0044, no. 1400038973; Wheelon memoranda to McCone, both titled "CORONA Management," 18 November and 10 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0058, no. 1400022830, and 1/C/0062, no. 1400029819; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 27 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; McMillan memorandum to McCone, "Management of CORONA Project" with attachment, "Responsibility for Operating Management of the CORONA Project," both dated 10 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0045, nos. 1400038975 and 1400038976; McMillan untitled memorandum to McNamara and McCone, 12 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0046, no. 1400038982; McCone letter to McMillan, 13 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0047, no. 1400038974; McMillan letter to McCone, 4 February 1964, with attached memorandum to Directors of Programs A and B, "Operating and Engineering Objectives for Corona," 3 February 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0049, nos. 1400022836 and 1400022837; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 75, 80; [redacted] CIA and the NRO," 42-43, 45-46. ~~XX~~

⁶¹ Sources for the Aerospace affair are: Day, "Development and Improvement of the CORONA Satellite," in *Eye in the Sky*, 79, 259 n. 109; Wheelon, "CORONA," in *ibid.*, 41-43; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; Carter memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 25 June 1964, transcript of McCone-McMillan telephone conversation on 27 June 1964, cable [redacted] to Director), 27 June 1964, McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Vance on 29 June 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with NRO ExComm, 12 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 6 October 1964, *ibid.*, folder 13; Vance letter to McCone, 4 September 1964, and McCone's reply, 10 September 1964, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 9; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 12-13, 47; McMillan untitled memorandum to Carter, 30 June 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1409; Carter letter to Vance, 28 August 1964, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 18; McMillan untitled memorandum to Director of Program B, 18 May 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0054, no. 1400022831; McMillan cable to Directors of Programs A and B, 17 August 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0061, no. 1400073399; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 1 September 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0064, no. 1400069468; Carter memorandum to Vance, "CIA Program B Participation in CORONA," NRO CAL 1/A/0066, no. 1400022723; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 29 September 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0067, no. 1400066666; McCone letter to Vance, 6 October 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0070, no. 1400022813; McCone letter to Vance, 21 October 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0073, no. 1400022785; Carter cable to McMillan, 2 December 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0083, no. 1400022777; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, 8 December 1964, NRO CAL 1/A/0085, no. 1400022775; McMillan letter to Carter, 2 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0089, no. 1400067052; Carter letter to McMillan, 16 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0094, no. 1400022890; Carter memorandum about meetings with Vance and McMillan on 25 March 1965, NRO CAL 1/A/0096, no. 1400022888; *The Aerospace Corporation: Its Work, 1960-1980*, 17-19; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 83-86. Clarence "Kelly" Johnson of Lockheed, who designed the U-2 and A-12 aircraft, appealed directly to McCone to work against the contract transfer. Johnson letter to McCone, 6 July 1964, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 1. ~~XX~~

⁶² An early sign of Vance's attitudes on the NRP issue came in July 1961, when, as general counsel for the Department of Defense, he drafted a management proposal for the program. Instead of continuing to have the Pentagon and CIA run it jointly, Vance suggested placing responsibility for NRP management solely in the hands of a special assistant for reconnaissance whom the secretary of defense would select. CIA, in a subordinate role, would "assist the Department of Defense by providing support as required in areas of program security, communications, and covert contract administration." Vance, draft memorandum, "Management of the National Reconnaissance Program," 21 July 1961, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB35, doc. 3. (U)

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extended into Program B. Agency leaders took the position that the Pentagon's contractor would have nothing to do with CIA's designated duties in the NRP. If, in the judgment of the DCI or his deputies, Aerospace or Program A officials tried to act in any manner that adversely affected CORONA payloads or security, CIA would veto them. When Vance advised McCone that the Agency was acting contrary to Department of Defense directives on contracting, the DCI replied flatly: "[T]he man charged by the president with the responsibility of running an organization should run it in accordance with the policies and procedures which best conform to the particular organization, not the policies and procedures established in some other department of government." Moreover, CIA management would not allow the expanded Agency presence in Los Angeles—which was agreed to during preceding months in order to encourage interdepartmental cooperation—to be subsumed under Program A or used merely for "backstopping" Air Force activities. Instead of being left to "watch the parade go by," as Carter put it, McCone wanted CIA's West Coast personnel to take part in all aspects of the CORONA program that affected Agency equities—including Program A affairs. ~~✗~~

The test of wills over CORONA management persisted into late 1964 and early 1965, by which time Carter—with McCone's support—succeeded in countermanding the DNRO's orders to Agency personnel in Program B. As far as the Seventh Floor was concerned, the Program B chain of command circumvented NRO altogether. Lockheed remained under CIA contract and was paid with Agency (not NRP) funds. This particular squabble ended in March 1965 when McCone and Vance agreed to suspend changes in contracting or management procedures in the CORONA program until the larger issue of NRP authority was resolved. McCone, Carter, and Wheelon had achieved a clear bureaucratic victory. They had prevented McMillan from exercising control over any important aspect of CIA's CORONA activities—to a significant degree because the DCI and DDCI were willing to go over the DNRO's head and deal directly with the secretary and deputy secretary of defense.⁶³ (U)

⁶³ Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 89–94, 98–100. Also, the DNRO insisted on adhering to a "two buckets a month" launch schedule set forth in October 1964—contrary to McCone's preferences that enough time be allowed between shots to permit film readout in case targets needed to be changed. McMillan still had authority to cancel CORONA launchings—as he did on 23 March 1965, citing CIA's failure to provide Program A managers with information needed to conduct the mission. McMillan memorandum to McCone and Vance, "Requirement for Return of CORONA Data," 11 March 1965, and McCone letter to McMillan, 13 March 1965, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 17; Jackson D. Maxey (DS&T/Special Projects Staff) memorandum to Carter, "The CORONA Program" (with attachment), 29 March 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 20, folder 413. ~~✗~~

⁶⁴ [redacted] "View from CIA: The Development, Management, and Exploitation of Satellite Reconnaissance," unpublished manuscript (1990), 27–28; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 4; National Reconnaissance Office, *The Story*, 16, 179–82. ~~✗~~

Dueling Systems (U)

McCone and the other NRP principals also fought over what community organization would have primacy in next-generation imagery satellites. Although CORONA's accomplishments exceeded the expectations of its designers, it was still regarded as a stopgap collection and recovery system. American intelligence planners and analysts needed, and demanded, higher resolution imagery to provide policymakers with estimates and warnings about Soviet strategic weapons and military intentions. (U)

Ironically, two of CORONA's achievements spurred efforts to replace it. Imagery obtained in June 1961 revealed a facility near Leningrad that some analysts believed was a new antiballistic missile (ABM) system for countering US intermediate-range missiles. In 1962, photoanalysts detected a suspected ABM site in Tallinn, Estonia. Lacking relevant HUMINT, the Kennedy administration turned to CORONA for more information. Designed for wide-area search missions, CORONA cameras had a resolution of six to nine meters, and even the newest system could not resolve objects as small as surface-to-air missiles. ~~✗~~

[redacted] The decision about what system would replace CORONA was continually complicated by bureaucratic politics between CIA, NRO, and the Department of Defense. The technical choice between a close-look and a wide-area system also involved determining which NRP agency would take the lead in developing and operating CORONA's successor. In the perception of top CIA and Pentagon officials, that selection would determine the course of American space reconnaissance for years to come.⁶⁴ ~~✗~~

The first moves in this controversy occurred in 1962. McCone and then-DNRO Charyk prodded the "black" Air Force to speed up work on a high-resolution (two to three feet) spotting satellite called [redacted] (also known by the designation of the camera it would use, the KH-7) and to begin a joint CIA-Air Force effort to produce an interim

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close-look satellite, LANYARD, using "off-the-shelf" equipment. [] under development since 1960, would not be ready until mid-1963, and LANYARD was intended to fill the requirement for detailed imagery of the Tallinn facility. LANYARD combined a high-resolution camera (the KH-6) developed for the cancelled SAMOS program with the launch and recovery systems used on CORONA missions.⁶⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone's pessimism about the two projects—he told PFIAB in December 1962 that "both of them have serious problems" that "may not be licked.... I am afraid we might run into trouble with them"—was justified. Nothing in LANYARD, from the boosters to the film return capsule to the cameras, worked reliably, and only one of three missions attempted during March–July 1963 was even partly successful. [] got off to a bad start as well when []

[] Trouble-shooting quickly resolved the problems, however, and three [] missions during July–September returned usable photography. With the Air Force's satellite evidently a success, McMillan cancelled LANYARD soon after. (Earlier, he had used that project's difficulties as a justification for giving the Air Force full control of it—even though the problems were with the rockets, not the cameras.) Meanwhile, the new KH-4 camera, with a resolution of 10 feet, was successfully deployed in June, but another mission using the KH-2 stereoscopic camera to photograph the Leningrad complex failed. Overall, 1963 was a bleak year for US satellite reconnaissance. One third of the CORONA missions failed—including one in June that targeted the Leningrad site—compared to only three of 20 the year before. ~~XX~~

CORONA's inconsistent performance around this time, and the Air Force's achievement with [] gave McCone a powerful incentive to establish a CIA-only program to develop a satellite system with both close-look and broad-search capabilities. The technical, bureaucratic, and personal lines of force in the "fight for the sky spies" converged over that project, called [] The episode

showed the strength of McCone and Wheelon's determination to secure for CIA an unassailable place in post-CORONA space reconnaissance. It began in May 1963, when McCone convened a panel of experts chaired by []

[] to take a sweeping look at the future of satellite reconnaissance. He asked the [] to devote special attention to the amount of camera resolution needed to satisfy intelligence requirements, how far photographic technology could be expected to improve, and how vulnerable US satellites were to Soviet attack. The DCI had hoped this distinguished group would endorse his plan to have CIA develop a system to replace CORONA. Instead, the experts recommended improvements to CORONA, judging that "an attempt to make a completely new system which would provide equally wide coverage with a modest improvement in resolution... would not be a wise investment of resources."⁶⁶ ~~XX~~

Not dissuaded, McCone directed Wheelon to investigate the requirements for and the possible configuration of a second-generation search satellite. The main question the DDS&T and his staff had to address was how much resolution was needed to fulfill community requirements for imagery of Soviet strategic targets. A detailed in-house experiment, which included 25 NPIC photointerpreters, concluded that most targets could be properly identified at a resolution of two to four feet. Wheelon decided that an entirely new camera system with a longer focal length would have to be developed to meet such requirements. While the DS&T was working on its study, CORONA's Performance Evaluation Team reached the contrary assessment that the lenses on the KH-series cameras could be enlarged without losing acuity; in other words, the old system could be improved sufficiently to satisfy the community's imagery needs.⁶⁷ ~~XX~~

At this point, NRP principals squared off over [] [] McMillan and the NRO staff did not want CIA independently to design a replacement for CORONA, and supported the recommendations of the [] and the CORONA evaluation team that the old system be

⁶⁵ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: [] "Corona," in [] ed., *CORONA: America's First Satellite Program*, 31; Dwayne A. Day, "Failed Phoenix: The KH-6 LANYARD Reconnaissance Satellite," *Spaceflight* 39, no. 5 (May 1997): 170–74; [] "CORONA: The Final Years," unpublished manuscript (1986), 12–14, 26–27, and idem, "The View from CIA," 28, 47; Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 144; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 94, 99; NRO, [] 41, 179–82; McCone memorandum (dated 10 December 1962) about meeting with PFIAB on 7 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter and Wheelon, 20 September 1963, NRO CAL 1/A/0041, no. 1400067071. Because of recurrent poor weather, the [] ~~XX~~

⁶⁶ Purcell Panel report in DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1406. McCone was so determined that CIA develop a new satellite that in early 1964 he even considered (albeit temporarily) relinquishing much of the Agency's authority over CORONA in return from a free hand with its successor. Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 79. ~~XX~~

⁶⁷ Wheelon memorandum, "Project []" May 1964, DS&T Files, Job 78B03193A, box 60, folder 1408; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 5–6. ~~XX~~

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"scaled up." They were counting on the success of [] and, as described above, hoped to maneuver as much of CORONA as possible out of Program B and into Program A. McCone disagreed with the NRO view and discussed the matter with Deputy Secretary Gilpatric and other NRP officials in late October 1963. They decided to form, under joint CIA-NRO-Air Force sponsorship, a group of the nation's leading optical experts to explore ways to improve satellite photography (and specifically to investigate why CORONA film was clouding). The panel, named the Satellite Photography Working Group and headed by physicist Sidney Drell of Stanford University, basically supported the Agency's contentions that CORONA had been pushed to its technical limits, and that a new system was needed to provide both wide-area and close-look capabilities. Studies Wheelon had obtained from two contractors, []

[] concurred. McMillan pigeonholed the Drell Committee assessment inside NRO by referring it to another review panel, but he could do nothing about the DS&T reports, which McCone and Wheelon used along with the Drell study to justify their next, controversial, move.⁶⁸

In May 1964, Wheelon contracted with [] to prepare a joint proposal for a CORONA replacement.⁶⁹ The contractors returned with specifications for a photographic payload, a reentry vehicle, and a launch rocket. Over the strong objections of McMillan and Fubini, McCone asked Gilpatric to direct the DNRO to establish [] as an NRO project and assign responsibility for its research, development and operation to CIA. McCone received a timely endorsement in June from another panel of experts, chaired by Edwin Land, which called [] "extremely attractive" and said it deserved an immediate investment of []

[] In early July, Wheelon formally presented a []

[] project plan to McMillan. Vance, just installed as number-two man at the Pentagon, tried to slow the process by suggesting the DNRO complete comparative studies and explore alternatives before committing to the Agency proposal. Vance authorized CIA to pursue "design tests necessary to establish the feasibility of the proposed [] camera concept."⁷⁰

Wheelon, with McCone's approval, went far beyond design studies. After USIB in late July called for developing a broad-search and a spotting system, he created a Special Projects Staff in the DS&T to handle all Agency satellite reconnaissance programs; proposed that CIA sponsor two competitions for contracts to design the [] camera's film-handling system; and invited proposals and bids for the spacecraft and recovery vehicle. When the DNRO asked Wheelon to furnish a [] briefing to a steering group Vance had set up to evaluate satellite designs, the DDS&T refused. He "would have to await instructions from 'his boss'" before agreeing to brief the group. Moreover, in NRP meetings, McCone and Carter argued that [] cost too much and that combining close-look and wide-area capabilities in [] would save up to []

These events infuriated McMillan.⁷¹ He argued against [] (and for Air Force designs) on engineering grounds—"the issue is whether a system that involved many fewer technical risks than this one but which only painted a stripe [] might not in the end be a valid competitor to this"—and asserted that under NRP-3, CIA had no authority to contract for anything besides cameras and other sensor systems; spacecraft and rockets were the Air Force's responsibility. Allowing McCone and Wheelon to implement their plan would give CIA "an independent capability for full-scale development of space systems," which he, as DNRO, could not countenance.⁷²

⁶⁸ Drell Committee report in DS&T Files, Job 79B00314A, box 5, folder 7; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 6.

⁶⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Jonathan E. Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 232-35; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 7-9; Perry, *Management of the NRP* 86-89; Wheelon memoranda, "Land Panel Review of []" and "Proposal for []" both dated 26 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Carter memorandum to Wheelon, "Conduct of the [] Program," 27 August 1964, and Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "Conduct of the [] Program," 31 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 378; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 5 January 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 6; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15.

⁷⁰ The Land Panel was a working group the President's Science Advisory Committee had set up to oversee satellite reconnaissance programs. (U)

⁷¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: transcript of McCone meeting with McMillan, Fubini, Wheelon, and Maxey on 26 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11; transcript of McCone-McMillan meeting on 28 May 1964, *ibid.*, folder 10; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 22 June 1964, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 5; Carter memorandum about meeting with McMillan on 25 June 1964, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 11; McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 August 1964, *ibid.*, folder 12; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 January 1965, *ibid.*, folder 15; McMillan letter to McCone, 22 January 1965, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 9; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 7-8; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 86-87; Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 233-34.

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Accordingly, when Carter asked McMillan to commit upwards of [] NRO funds to [] he declined unless he controlled the project. Throughout the dispute, McMillan accused Wheelon of concealing from him important activities the DS&T was conducting under NRP auspices. The DNRO did not mention, however, that he had violated NRP-3 as well. In early 1964—even before [] began—he approved Program A contracts with [] for cameras with wide-area capabilities. That action infringed on CIA's responsibility under NRP-3. (McMillan also tried to enter an agreement with [] a CIA contractor, but the company refused because it was already working on a similar project for the Agency.) Even after [] received formal approval, the DNRO authorized additional studies of cameras for use in a Program A project called [] ~~(S)~~

Moreover, McMillan committed so much NRP money in FY 1965 to a significantly improved [] system (called G-3) that little was left for [] and he delayed the release of unspent FY 1964 funds that had been authorized for the Agency's project. When McCone found out, he complained that McMillan was, in effect, unilaterally establishing collection requirements by allocating funds for a particular system and restricting expenditures for others. At a time when the community was "bleeding" for a higher resolution search system to acquire strategic intelligence, the DCI said, the DNRO was concentrating on a targeting satellite for military uses. By late August, provisional NRP funds for [] had been found, and development work seemed about to move ahead. ~~(S)~~

The contracting dispute heated up in the autumn of 1964, however. In the field, the relationship between CIA [] was stormy because of differences between two stiff-necked employees—Wheelon's deputy for special projects, Jackson Maxey, and the company's chief engineer, []—over contract specifications and management procedures. When Richard Bissell directed CIA's satellite programs, he gave contractors wide latitude. In contrast, Wheelon recalls, Maxey "tended to give them a good deal more direction than they felt they needed." At the top leadership level, Vance—trying to counter Wheelon's practice of letting [] contracts without McMillan's approval—told McCone that he preferred that technical direction of the project be given to a systems engineering

contractor. The DCI resisted; doing so "would mean liquidating CIA's in-house capability, transferring it to some contractor, schooling him in the project...and just hoping it would work out." Vance replied that he would then reconsider his decision to proceed with [] McCone countered that Vance's idea was "bad business...improper...a stupid procedure" that would cause delays and waste money. "I tried to avoid such mistakes in both business and government and did not intend to make one in the instance of []" he said. Direction of the project must remain within the US government. If the deputy secretary of defense insisted on giving such managerial responsibility to a contractor, the DCI would consider pursuing [] independently of the NRP.

I did not think that Dr. McMillan or General Greer's organization [the Program A office] had the competence, the imagination[,] nor the will to do the job properly.... [A]s DCI, I could not live under arrangements which I thought ultimately would deprive the Intelligence Community and the United States Government of an intelligence gathering resource that would be essential...and would be the best resource science could produce.⁷² ~~(S)~~

At a meeting in early October, querulous NRP principals traded charges and countercharges about CIA's handling of [] Words such as "deceit," "fair-haired boy," "reneged," "disgust," and "arrogant intransigence" captured the sorry state of relations among the attendees, who already were mad at one another over the CORONA argument. A few days later, a defiant McCone told the director of the Bureau of the Budget that he "had no intention of stopping" [] would pay for it from CIA research and development funds for FY 1965, and "would not, under any circumstances," turn over technical direction of the project to a contractor. If "McMillan's organization," which "lacked competence and breadth," had its way, McCone could not discharge his responsibilities as DCI.⁷³ ~~(S)~~

The [] feud subsided briefly toward the end of 1964 but erupted again with full force in early 1965. Harbingers of trouble appeared in mid-January, when McCone, Wheelon, Maxey, Fubini, McMillan, Land, and others from CIA and the Pentagon went to [] to discuss the project with company executives and

⁷² Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 241; [] "Charting a Technical Revolution: An Interview with Former DDS&T Albert Wheelon," *Studies* 45, no. 2 (2001): 40; McCone memorandum about NRO EXComm meeting on 15 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13 ~~(S)~~

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engineers. McCone asked the president of [] and his head engineer, [] if [] was "the best approach" to the close look/broad search requirement. They gave guardedly affirmative answers ("Yes...considering the constraints..."; "Yes, at the moment..."). Privately, [] told McCone that [] was under an NRO contract with the Air Force to develop alternatives to []. At the NRO ExComm meeting to discuss the trip, McMillan made two statements that rankled McCone, who resented their "turnabout is fair play" subtext. The DNRO said that several contractors, including [] conducting NRO-funded studies of search systems that would compete with [] and he claimed that Wheelon had instructed an Agency contractor, [] not to tell NRO that it was working on a [] alternative. McCone denounced the "bureaucratic nonsense" that was delaying NRO's reimbursement of CIA for its expenditures on the project, and McMillan agreed to look into the matter immediately.⁷⁴ ~~SECRET~~

After the meeting, the DCI spoke with Vance alone. He said that the DNRO's action—releasing money to a contractor for projects that properly were CIA's, without informing him, and warning the contractor not to divulge the arrangement to the Agency—was "the last straw." If Vance and McNamara would not straighten out NRO, McCone "intend[ed] to take [the issue] to higher authority." Vance replied that he was "fully sympathetic," but that resolving the CIA-NRO controversy "was deferred by other

and more pressing problems." A resolution appeared still farther away after Carter and Vance got into an argument over the latter's refusal to release more NRP funds for []. Carter charged Vance with letting politics sway his decision, at which point the deputy secretary of defense "became visibly upset, broke up the meeting, and invited General Carter to leave his office."⁷⁵ ~~SECRET~~

In late February 1965, [] stunned Agency managers by suddenly announcing that Itek was withdrawing from the [] contract—potentially worth []. He claimed that the technical specifications CIA demanded were not required under the contract and that Itek had told Agency officers that those details were causing performance problems. In response to that warning, according to [], CIA's representatives rebuffed the company's proposed alternatives and tried to pressure its executives into endorsing a flawed design by promising jobs or threatening to "take over" the company.~~SECRET~~

Several aspects of [] action upset McCone, Carter, and Wheelon, who lit into [] in meetings at CIA Headquarters. First was what they regarded as [] clumsy handling of the decision. The company had decided on the pullout later on the same day that it had briefed Edwin Land's panel about [] in the same cautiously optimistic tone it had used at the mid-January conference. McCone upbraided [] for that "stupid" move. In addition, the DCI felt he had been duped (and by a former

⁷³ Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 6 October 1964, and McCone memorandum about meeting with Bureau of the Budget officials on 9 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13. A few months earlier, McCone had applied his business experience to the question. "[If] a manufacturer takes a license to build a device developed by another organization...the device remains static. On the other hand, the product of the licensor continually improves because of the input of the creators. Having invented and developed the device, they wish to continually improve and perfect it. The licensee is not so motivated." Furthermore, "[n]ot many men feel really inspired and are inclined to put forth their best efforts if their role in research and development and the production [sic] of their more, 'ingenuity is turned over to others once it is completed.'" Untitled memorandum about the PFIAB/Baker Panel report, 25 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9. Unspoken throughout these discussions of [] was the fact that problems with [] were adding to the tension. [] missions in 1964 encountered serious problems—a record of unreliability that helped CIA and hurt NRO and the Air Force. NRO, []⁷⁴ ~~SECRET~~

⁷⁴ [] (Special Projects Staff) memorandum about trip to [] 9 January 1965, and McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 21 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15. The best open-source account of [] is Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, but it relies heavily on NRO histories, [] and recollections of company executives offered many years later, and does not include enough information from Agency sources to tell the story thoroughly.~~SECRET~~

⁷⁵ McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 21 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 15; Carter memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 27 January 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 6. Soon after—and presumably with this senior executive animosity in mind—McCone decided not to increase short-term Agency spending on []. He assumed the project would move ahead and wanted NRO to pay for the new system eventually. Carter untitled memorandum to Wheelon, 11 February 1965, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 17.~~SECRET~~

⁷⁶ Principal sources used on this phase of the [] flap are: Paul Worthman (NRO) memorandum, "Telephone Conversations with Representatives of the [] Corporation," 24 February 1965, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB54.doc; transcripts of McCone meeting with Carter and [] and Carter meeting with Wheelon, Bross, and [] both on 25 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; transcript of McCone meeting with Fubini on 27 February 1965, *ibid.*; transcript of McCone meeting with Richard Garwin (IBM physicist) on 19 April 1965, *ibid.*, folder 4; McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 25 February 1965, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 15; McCone memorandum about meeting with Land on 8 March 1965, *ibid.*, folder 16; Petty, *Management of the NRP*, 95–97; Haines, "Critical to US Security," 10; transcript of Wheelon [] telephone conversation on 19 January 1965, NRO FOIA Reading Room, cabinet 7, drawer B, folder 61 (hereafter cited in this form: NRO [] 7/B/61); [] "Charting a Technical Revolution," 40–41; Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 244–6 [] privately complained to an Air Force manager in Program A that he decided to pull out of the [] project because the Agency was "fostering an 'immoral environment'" and that [] could not survive under the "domination of the CIA." Col. Paul E. Worthman, memorandum about [] discussions with McMillan and Land, 25 February 1965, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 2.~~SECRET~~

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Agency officer, at that). Nobody from [] had told him during the January inspection, or at any other time, that company engineers were not getting along with Maxey or that they had reservations about design details (the “scan angle”).⁷⁷ Drawing on his experience with contract disputes when he was a shipbuilder, the DCI could not fathom why [] had not mentioned those difficulties before they grew so severe. In his defense, [] argued that the Agency’s project officers were running rough-shod over his technical experts for objecting to the design CIA allegedly had mandated. After having been “reduced to mechanical engineers, draftsmen, and manufacturers rather than creative scientists,” [] officials resented having to take what they described as “an oath of loyalty” to CIA’s concept, only to be blamed if the experimental system failed. McCone later conceded that “our people might have gone a little too far” in pushing for [] but he did not address [] allegations of Agency pressure, and he supported Wheelon’s contention that the fault for the scan angle problem lay with []

Lastly, the DCI and his deputies feared that the [] affair would embarrass the Agency and call into question its competence to manage NRP contracts. The flap might cause a sudden political shift in favor of NRO and the Air Force, especially if PFIAB (through Land) criticized CIA to the White House for mishandling its relationship with [] Carter stated this concern more baldly (and conspiratorially) than anyone at the Agency, telling []

Had someone sat down and designed a procedure to totally discredit CIA and the technical competence of its people, in the presence of a political atmosphere which was well known to them, to completely destroy the morale of a group of certainly national-interest-oriented people of high competence, they could not have come up with a neater operation.... The logical process of what you've done is to discredit this Agency and its personnel in terms of its ability to pursue a program. You have established for the world that we were trying to sell a wooden nickel....

Starting from [] admission that the company had an NRO contract, however, McCone and his deputies suspected that [] president was concealing a lucrative Air Force offer to his company to stop working with CIA. [] had no significant source of income other than its Agency contract, so the DCI and other CIA executives surmised that the Air Force had made the cancellation worthwhile. When McCone asked [] "How much pressure has the Air Force put on you fellows to find a way to back out of this program?," the [] president replied, "Absolutely none in the recent--in the last two months. [] was working on a competing system for NRO, but no definitive evidence to support McCone's allegation has surfaced.⁷⁸ McCone also was bothered that [] had taken a large sum of money from the Agency but had delivered nothing. "I'm highly critical of [] for accepting what appears to me to be a several million dollar subsidy, and then, having gone all through this enthusiasm and support, everybody walks away from it," he told [] McCone was so indignant that he ushered [] out of their luncheon meeting without a handshake. ~~X~~

The Agency's concerns were not fanciful, as the NRO staff "received the news [of withdrawal] with undisguised glee" and "found the incident hilariously enjoyable," according to an internal NRO history. ~~XXXX~~

McCone and Wheelon tried to recover quickly. The Land Panel's preliminary endorsement of [redacted] in early March 1965 (formally issued in July) helped keep the project on track. To preserve what [redacted] had accomplished so far, Wheelon arranged the transfer of [redacted] plans and prototypes to another Agency contractor, [redacted] that had been working on a smaller backup design for CIA since 1964.

Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 242, 245. (U)

soon turned the charge back on CIA by alleging that unidentified Agency officers were "exerting improper pressure" on other contractors and other US government agencies. Jackson Maxey advised that CIA respond to this "affront" by forcing [] to prove its claims. The record does not indicate what follow-up occurred. Maxey memorandum to Carter, [] "Allegations Against the Agency," 30 March 1965, NRO [] 8/C/82. (U)

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Endgame (U)

At the same time they were engaged in these project-level battles, McCone and NRP principals made various efforts—some sincere, some halfhearted, some manipulative—to make the program work better, or at least to move it along the lines they and their departments wanted it to follow. In August 1964, McCone, Vance, Fubini, McMillan, and Carter began meeting weekly as an NRO Executive Committee—a format McCone supported but which, he commented to Vance, would not have been necessary if “a properly oriented DNRO was running the show.” At the first meeting, however, the resentment McMillan and Fubini felt toward Wheelon’s ambitions came through loud and clear. Fubini went so far as to insinuate that CIA was “trying to create another NASA.” McCone insisted that Fubini withdraw the remark, but he did allow later that the Agency’s growing in-house satellite capability seemed to be “worrying a lot of people around town.” He informed the committee that much of CIA’s recent effort in space reconnaissance responded to PFIAB’s recommendations after the Cuban missile crisis. At a later meeting, McCone—perhaps to highlight McMillan’s obstinacy—offered “any and all of CIA’s technical capability,” including Wheelon and his staff, to help the DNRO learn why the failure rate of CORONA

missions had increased recently. McMillan did not accept, as McCone presumably had expected. Following the fall 1964 elections, McCone pushed for the idea, agreed to by McNamara the previous August, of putting NRO in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Besides raising it with Vance, the DCI also lobbied Capitol Hill, particularly Rep. Mendel Rivers (D-SC), the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee (one of the four committees that oversaw CIA). Vance was unresponsive, however, and Rivers did not commit himself.⁸⁰

By this time, McCone had set a date for leaving CIA and was preparing to turn the NRO problem over to his successor.⁸¹ “In an atmosphere of prejudice and antagonism, it was difficult to make progress,” he told PFIAB. He had hoped McMillan would become frustrated with the infighting and leave, and, according to Elder, did what he could to bring that day closer. (Elder, however, has denied allegations that McCone and Vance agreed that if the former fired Wheelon, the latter would fire McMillan.) As it turned out, the DNRO outlasted the DCI on the job by five months. McCone had most of the last word on NRO, however. His 1964 reorganization scheme became the basis for a fourth, and much longer-lasting, NRP agreement (NRP-4) signed in August 1965 by Vance and McCone’s successor, William Raborn, who had a similar attitude about NRO.⁸² NRP-4 established NRO as a separate agency within the Depart-

⁷⁹ Garwin memorandum to Land with attached draft report of Land Panel, 5 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 9; Haines, “Critical to US Security,” 10; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 105. In April 1965 [] wrote McCone an apology for [] handling of the contract withdrawal, but he conceded nothing on the technical reasons for the decision. The pullout irreparably damaged CIA’s relations with []. They could not agree on terms for new CORONA contracts and instead just renewed old ones. Ittek kept building CORONA cameras until the program ended in 1972, but the company never again won a contract for a new spy satellite camera system. Lewis, *Spy Capitalism*, 258–59.

⁸⁰ McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 12 August 1964, and McCone memorandum to Vance, 14 August 1964 (with penciled notation, “Not sent—discussed in meeting”) attached to McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 18 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12; McCone memorandum about meeting with Vance on 16 December 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 479–81; McCone memorandum about NRO ExComm meeting on 23 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13; McCone memoranda about meetings with Vance on 21 January and 25 February 1965, *ibid.*, folder 15; minutes of NRO ExComm meetings, 26 August 1964 to 5 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 17, folder 15.

A lower-level, less formal group—proposed in different form by Gilpatric, and comprising Carter, Wheelon, McMillan, and Fubini—had met in late 1963 and early 1964 in an unsuccessful attempt to achieve comity by committee. McCone and Wheelon had opposed Gilpatric’s idea of creating a formal, chartered review committee. The DDS&T argued that he would be subordinate to the DNRO under the original scheme. Carter untitled memorandum to McCone, 6 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 75; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, “Secretary Gilpatric’s Proposal for an NRP Review Committee,” 6 December 1963, NRO CAL 1/C/0060, no. 1400066670.

⁸¹ Sources for this section are: Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB on 4 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 382; “Agreement for Reorganization of the National Reconnaissance Program,” 13 August 1965, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 506–10; Haines, *National Reconnaissance Office*, 25; *idem*, “Critical to US Security,” 10–11; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 106–11; Perry, “History of Satellite Reconnaissance,” 163–65; NRO, *The CORONA Story*, 103–8; Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 112–21; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 11–12; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 10–11; [] “CIA and the NRO,” 49–52.

⁸² Edwin Land had warned Wheelon and McMillan in early 1965 that unless they started cooperating with each other, “a strong wind would come along and blow them both out of the NRO tree.” Still, Wheelon advised Raborn not to sign the agreement. John Bross, head of the NIPE, represented CIA in the NRP-4 negotiations; Fubini took the lead for the Pentagon. Land [] OH, 10; [] vol. 2, 254; Perry, *Management of the NRP*, 109.

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ment of Defense; designated the secretary of defense as the executive branch agent of the NRP; set up a new Executive Committee (to include the DCI, the deputy secretary of defense, and the presidential science adviser) that would manage the program and report to the secretary of defense; and granted the DCI authority to establish collection requirements for reconnaissance satellites. The DNRO and DDS&T would attend Executive Committee meetings but could not vote, and the former's status was reduced to that of an assistant secretary—on par with a CIA deputy director. Also, three personnel changes eliminated much of the hostility: McCone resigned as DCI in April; Wheelon, although still DDS&T, no longer would be the Agency's NRO representative; and McMillan stepped down as DNRO in September. His replacement, Alexander Flax, joined the new DDCI, Richard Helms, in developing a more congenial relationship between CIA and the Pentagon.

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NRP-4 was a compromise between CIA and the Air Force. It made NRO less parochial by taking it out of a service branch, but the NRP would remain ultimately under the Pentagon's authority, with direct CIA input in policy-making. The management of separate systems was divided. CIA would run CORONA and [redacted] and the Air Force would have charge of [redacted] and the proposed [redacted]. CIA did not get control of the satellite operations center in Sunnyvale, California, which programmed collection schedules, nor was it relieved of the budgetary restrictions of earlier agreements. That NRP-4 distressed partisans on both sides suggested how Solomonic it was. McMillan believed it "weakened considerably" the authority of NRO, while Jackson Maxey, Wheelon's special projects chief, resigned from CIA because he believed it constrained the Agency too much.⁸³

The fourth NRP agreement led to successful cooperation between CIA and the "black" Air Force on several satellite

collection projects and worked better as a decisionmaking structure than the earlier accords. The two organizations still competed and occasionally overreacted to real or perceived slights, and the Agency remained underrepresented on the NRO staff. Despite their history of distrust, however, CIA and the Air Force gradually smoothed out the roughest spots in their relationship and avoided much of the interdepartmental fighting and personal bickering that had threatened to derail the US space reconnaissance effort.⁸⁴

OXCART: Development, Deployment, and Disclosure (U)

One of CIA's most awe-inspiring technological achievements—the fastest, highest-flying manned jet aircraft ever built—reached its final stages of development while McCone was DCI. From his first days in office, McCone gave high priority to CIA's supersonic successor to the U-2, developed under a project named (with deliberate irony) OXCART. The program had its share of technical problems and bureaucratic run-ins, but none of the latter were nearly as serious as those that beset the NRP. McCone's main disappointment with the OXCART aircraft was not seeing it used for its intended purpose: overflights of the Soviet Union to photograph strategic targets. (U)

In 1957, while Washington worried about the U-2's growing vulnerability to Soviet air defenses, Agency engineers began considering a jet that could fly so high and so fast that it could not be shot down. Lockheed and Convair competed to design the concept the following year; Lockheed won the contract in 1959; and production of the aircraft, designated the A-12 (A for "Archangel"), commenced in 1960. Major technological and logistical challenges caused lengthy delays and large cost overruns, but Lockheed finally delivered the first A-12 [redacted] in late February 1962 and had it ready for flight testing two months later. In

⁸³ The recommendations of several reports on the NRP produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s—by the RAND Corporation, a presidential blue-ribbon commission, and a congressional study group—were shaped significantly by a historical review of the CIA-NRO dispute. Perry, "History of Satellite Reconnaissance," 146, 165. One subject McCone and the NRP principals had been able to agree on was putting US reconnaissance satellite programs under cover. He thought there should be no public discussion of spy satellites. When the programs received press coverage in early 1962, he advised the administration to acknowledge only that "the United States has long been engaged in...satellite research and development." On 23 March 1962, Gilpatric signed a memorandum, drafted by Charyk, imposing tightened security over the NRP. The existence of NRO already was classified, but now the cover story for CORONA—the "Discoverer" program of biomedical research—was jettisoned. All satellite projects afterward were classified Secret, no programs were identified by name, and launches were to be noted only by date. McCone concurred with the White House and the Pentagon that making the reconnaissance satellites "black" would deny important technical intelligence to the Soviets and reduce the likelihood of attacks on them. The Department of State and the newly created Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, however, opposed the security measures—the former because it believed openness would legitimize space reconnaissance better than secrecy, the latter because it believed the new strictures would impede progress toward an arms control agreement by preventing discussion of verification methods. Gerald M. Steinberg, *Satellite Reconnaissance: The Role of Informal Bargaining*, 47–48; Richelson, *America's Secret Eyes in Space*, 65–66; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 129–30; Stares, 63–65.

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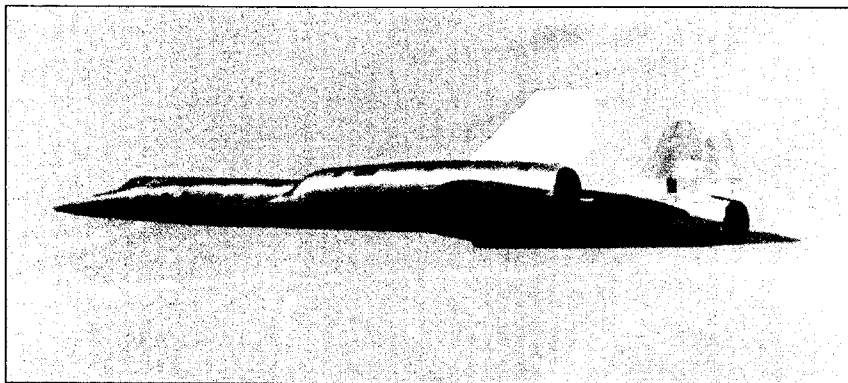
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July 1963, an A-12 first flew at Mach 3, and in November 1963, the design speed of Mach 3.2 was reached at an altitude of 78,000 feet.

As he had with the reconnaissance satellite systems, McCone quickly familiarized himself with OXCART's history and design and monitored the project throughout his tenure. During his first week at Langley, he wrote to the president of the United Aircraft Corporation about the problems its subsidiary Pratt and Whitney was having with the A-12's engines, and he told Pentagon officials he wanted to inspect the work being done on them in Miami. He requested briefings on the program and showed particular interest in the selection of personnel, training and testing procedures, and cover stories. The DCI sent a congratulatory telegram to the pilot of the first successful test flight. After an A-12 crashed on takeoff in December 1964, he ordered the Office of Security to investigate whether sabotage was involved. It was not.⁸⁶

After the A-12 had been tested, McCone met resistance from the Pentagon when he argued for its quick deployment. He regarded the A-12 as the best way to obtain crucial imagery of denied areas quickly, but McNamara and Gilpatric insisted that satellites were more practical and less expensive. McNamara went so far as to tell McCone in mid-1962 that he doubted OXCART would ever be used. The DCI—hoping the Kennedy administration would lift the ban on manned overflights of the Soviet Union now that an

untouchable spyplane existed—replied that he had every intention of using the A-12 and had so advised the president. The Cuban missile crisis helped McCone make his case; a slow-moving U-2 was shot down, and satellites could not provide the short-notice coverage needed. The DCI also argued that enough engineering problems were still occurring in the satellite programs—several mishaps had occurred in 1963—that the US government should consider flying the OXCART over Soviet territory. After the rocket lifting



First flight of the A-12, 30 April 1962 (U)

the new LANYARD system failed in March 1963, McCone proposed to President Kennedy that the A-12 be used to photograph the suspected Soviet ABM sites the satellite was to have photographed. The president refused, expressing hope that space-based imagery systems would be improved instead.⁸⁷

After Lyndon Johnson took office in November 1963, McCone pressed his point when the new president asked about overflight policies. In an exercise in sophistry, the DCI rationalized that Kennedy's suspension of flights over

⁸⁵ The developmental history of the OXCART is thoroughly covered in Paul F. Crickmore, *Lockheed SR-71: The Secret Missions Exposed*; Lou Drendel, *SR-71 Blackbird in Action*; Robert Jackson, *High Cold War*, chap. 15; Dennis R. Jenkins, *Lockheed SR-71/YF-12 Blackbirds*, chaps. 1–5; Clarence L. Johnson, "Development of the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird," *Studies* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 3–14; Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson with Maggie Smith, *Kelly: More Than My Share of It All*, chap. 14; Thomas P. McIninch, "The OXCART Story," *Studies* 15, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 1–34; Pedlow and Welzenbach, chap. 6; Ben R. Rich and Leo Janos, *Skunk Works: A Personal Memoir of My Years at Lockheed*, chaps. 9–10; and Mike Spick, *American Spyplanes*, chaps. 7–8. A snapshot of the OXCART program toward the end of McCone's directorship is provided in two DS&T memoranda to McCone, both titled "OXCART Status Report," 26 January and 26 February 1965, MORI doc. nos. 207009 and 207011.

Several versions of the basic OXCART aircraft were built. The A-12 was CIA's single-seat reconnaissance model, equipped with high-resolution cameras. Under a project codenamed TAGBOARD, [redacted] The YF-12A was the Air Force's two-seat interceptor that carried radar, infrared sensors, and air-to-air missiles. Codenamed KEDLOCK, the craft was not deployed. The SR-71 was the Air Force's two-seat reconnaissance model, fitted with optical [redacted] Known as the Blackbird, it became the best-known and most-used version of the OXCART.

⁸⁶ McIninch, 13, 17, 19; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Gilpatric on December 4, 1961, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Elder untitled memorandum to Carter and Scoville, 27 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 397. To demonstrate his confidence in the A-12, Wheelon flew on a test flight of the two-seat trainer prototype. He recalled that McCone "roundly criticized" him for "risking my person" that way. Albert D. Wheelon, "And the Truth Shall Keep You Free: Recollections by the First Deputy Director for Science and Technology," *Studies* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 76.

⁸⁷ [redacted] 298–99; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Gilpatric on 5 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 134, 136; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 15 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4.

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the Soviet Union was not diplomatically binding. "Contrary to popular assumption, President Kennedy did not make any pledge or give an assurance, at least publicly, that there would be no further overflights. He limited his response to a statement that he had ordered that the flights not be resumed. An order, obviously, is valid only until countermanded." The new president did not seriously consider lifting the ban, however.⁸⁸

Aerial reconnaissance of East and Southeast Asia was a different matter. Overflights of those regions did not create the diplomatic problems overflights of the Soviet Union did, and policymakers were anxious to learn about Communist China's nuclear program. Losses of four U-2s and numerous drones to Chinese air defenses in three years led the administration to consider flying the A-12 over the mainland. In mid-March 1965,

McCone, McNamara, and Vance agreed to "authorize all preparatory steps" to fly OXCART missions against Chinese strategic targets if the president authorized them. Under Project BLACK SHIELD, an A-12 detachment was based on Okinawa, but authorization to fly over China never came.⁸⁹

The question of whether the US government should publicly disclose the OXCART program arose periodically throughout McCone's directorship. He initially opposed "surfacing" the A-12 or its variants, but he changed his view as technical and political developments required. The Department of Defense in 1962 grew concerned that it could not overtly explain all the money the Air Force was spending on its versions of OXCART. At the same time, some CIA and Pentagon officials recognized that crashes or sightings of test flights could compromise the program. In late 1962 and early 1963, the Department of Defense considered surfacing the Air Force's YF-12A interceptor to provide a cover; divulging the existence of a purely tactical

aircraft would not disclose any clandestine collection capabilities. McCone resisted publicity for the time being, but he was willing to entertain keeping the A-12's cover story if the Pentagon would not reveal its special features and take full responsibility for explaining its procurement procedure.⁹⁰

The surfacing issue soon came to PFIAB's attention. Board members—particularly Killian and Land—objected strenuously to disclosing any version of OXCART on the grounds that publicity would compromise its design innovations, enable the Soviets to develop countermeasures, and destroy its value for reconnaissance. This would be a mistake, they argued, estimating that it would be many years before satellite photography would approach the resolution expected from the systems OXCART would carry. McCone suggested to Killian and Land that they join him in communicating those reservations to the president. They did so, and, after a meeting at the White House, McNamara agreed to develop the YF-12A under existing covert procedures and to discuss it—rather than the A-12—if an accident or forced landing required a public response.⁹¹

The issue lingered because OXCART technology would be useful for the Air Force's supersonic B-70 bomber, then under development, and for the proposed commercial supersonic transport (SST), federal subsidization of which was under discussion in Congress. As McCone told President Kennedy in September 1963, OXCART's contractors, Lockheed and Pratt and Whitney, had received a headstart over other aerospace firms in the race to develop an SST. This situation, he believed, could be rectified by providing selected executives of the competing companies with compartmented information about the A-12. (According to Wheelon, none of the companies accepted the Agency's offer.) At around the same time, McCone concluded that no good cover story for OXCART remained and that the aircraft's secrecy could not be preserved much

⁸⁸ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 195; McCone memorandum to President Johnson, "Response to Query Concerning U-2 Overflight Policy," 15 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 399. The OXCART program got a boost in mid-1964 after Soviet Premier Khrushchev threatened to start shooting down U-2s over Cuba later in the year. McCone laid out the case for using the A-12 to overfly Cuba in a project codenamed SKYLARK. In August, Acting DCI Carter directed that a detachment of A-12s be ready for emergency deployment over the island by early November. The scare passed, and the contingency plan was never put into effect. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 299–300; McNinch, 19–20; McCone memorandum, "Aerial Surveillance of Cuba," [May 1964,] DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 3.

⁸⁹ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 300ff; McNinch, 20–29; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara and Vance on 18 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16.

⁹⁰ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 292; McCone, "Memorandum for the Files—Various Activities," 3 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 9. Some early thought was given to declaring OXCART as part of a satellite launch system and concealing it in the space reconnaissance compartment. That procedure, however, would have complicated security for the satellites because of CIA's historical connection with reconnaissance aircraft. Scoville memorandum to McCone, "OXCART Cover Story," 14 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 397.

⁹¹ Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone meeting with PFIAB on 28 December 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140; McCone memorandum about meeting with Killian on 11 January 1963, and memorandum about meeting at the White House on 21 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4.

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longer. Whatever story was used, Lockheed's role would indicate CIA involvement. McCone suggested one way out of the bind: changing the A-12's mission. Improvements in satellite photography—particularly better camera resolution—would reduce, if not eliminate, the need for aerial overflights of the Soviet Union, so the A-12 could be surfaced as a tactical military aircraft. [REDACTED]

President Kennedy remained reluctant to give out information on OXCART except on a need-to-know basis, but his successor, Lyndon Johnson, was willing to reconsider surfacing—partly to generate good publicity for the military. At a meeting held less than a week after Kennedy's death, McCone, McNamara, Bundy, and Dean Rusk met with the new president to discuss OXCART. McNamara used the occasion to forcefully argue for surfacing, pointing out that the program was becoming harder to hide. McCone recommended not surfacing until strictly necessary but continued to ask permission to brief selected representatives of aviation companies active in the SST program. Johnson decided to defer the matter for further consideration.⁹³ [REDACTED]

By early 1964, however, McCone found the argument for disclosure convincing. [REDACTED]

The plane's existence probably would be revealed eventually under circumstances the US government could not control, such as a training accident or equipment malfunction, or through a news leak. Commercial airline crews had sighted the A-12 in flight, and the editor of *Aviation Week*

indicated that he knew about highly secret activities at Lockheed's "Skunk Works" in Burbank, California, and would not let another publication "scoop" him. Moreover, the White House's reluctance to resume overflights of Soviet territory would soon force a change in the A-12's mission. Instead of flying over denied areas to collect strategic intelligence, it would most likely be used as a quick-reaction surveillance platform in fast-moving conflicts—a tactical function the Air Force should carry out, not CIA. Lastly, the White House—beset with bad news from Vietnam, and looking to rebut Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater's charges that American weaponry was becoming obsolete—seemed determined to tout a military success story. For all these reasons, McCone rejected the advice of his senior deputies and joined in the NSC decision on 29 February to surface OXCART.⁹⁴ [REDACTED]

At a press conference later that day, President Johnson announced the successful development of an "advanced experimental aircraft...which has been tested in sustained flight at more than 2,000 miles per hour and at altitudes in excess of 70,000 feet." For security reasons, the A-11, rather than the A-12, was mentioned, and the Air Force's interceptor, not the Agency's reconnaissance version, was later displayed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.⁹⁵ The faster and higher-flying A-12s continued testing [REDACTED]

CIA's involvement in the project remained classified, although it was widely assumed. Meanwhile, McCone briefed selected members of the aviation industry about OXCART technology and served on the President's Advisory Committee on Supersonic Transport, which gave special attention to the costs the US government and aircraft

⁹² McCone memorandum about meeting with Killian on 21 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 23 September 1963, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 5; McCone memorandum about Special Group meeting on 17 October 1963, *ibid.*, box 1, folder 5; Wheelon [REDACTED] DH, 56. [REDACTED]

⁹³ McCone memorandum about meeting with the president on 23 September 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5; McCone memorandum about meeting with the president, McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk on 29 November 1963, *ibid.*, folder 6; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 9. Among Agency officers who opposed surfacing, Carter objected that revealing the existence of the A-12 would compromise a collection method that McCone was legally required to protect. In late 1963, he told the DCI that he feared "the [Department of Defense] is trying to euchre us into a position where they surface it as a political thing." He was generally correct. Wheelon also opposed surfacing and warned the DCI against agreeing to Fubini's proposed statement that the entire project had been transferred to the Air Force, ostensibly for cover purposes. "I am convinced that such a statement will only be used to make the immediate fiction become an early reality." Knoche notes of discussion with Carter, 19 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; Carter-Knoche OH, p. 37; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "OXCART Surfacing," 22 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 398. [REDACTED]

⁹⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Lawrence K. White, "Diary Notes," 27 September 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB74, doc. 17; Robert Bannerman (Office of Security) memorandum to McCone, "Project OXCART...", 7 October 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 398; McCone memorandum about meeting with the NSC on 29 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 7; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 10 February 1964, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 5; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Clifford, 20 February 1964, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 5; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 294–95; McNinch, 14–15; President Johnson letter to McCone, 3 April 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 15, folder 323; McCone calendars, entries for April and May 1964 and March and April 1965; McCone memorandum about meeting with McNamara on 17 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; transcripts of McCone meetings with United Airlines and TWA executives on 1 and 13 April 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 3; Laurence Barrett, "Debut in California—AF's Mystery Plane," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1 October 1964, Overhead Reconnaissance clipping file, HIC [REDACTED]

⁹⁵ When President Johnson disclosed the existence of the Blackbird in July 1964, he mistakenly transposed the intended designator letters RS (for Reconnaissance Strike) into SR. Rather than correct the commander-in-chief, Air Force officials let the error stand and came up with the Strategic Reconnaissance category so the SR designator could be used. Pedlow and Welzenbach, 312. (U)

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manufacturers would incur in developing an SST. In addition, preliminary work on successors to the A-12 began during McCone's last months at CIA. The projects (ISINGLASS and RHEINBERRY) did not move beyond the design stage because of technical challenges, high projected costs, and advances in satellite reconnaissance.⁹⁶

The OXCART proved to be a technically marvelous irrelevance. It never achieved its intended purpose of replacing the U-2 as a strategic collection platform. A-12s did not fly any missions until 1967, when they collected tactical intelligence over North Vietnam. By then, photo satellite systems were filling the role originally conceived for the OXCART. A CIA internal history concluded, "[t]he most advanced aircraft of the 20th century had become an anachronism before it was ever used operationally."⁹⁷

Why, then, did McCone try so hard to preserve the A-12 program—which Wheelon recalled as a recurrent "four-alarm fire" that could have ruined CIA's "reputation for doing things on the cheap quickly"?⁹⁸ A technically knowledgeable, budget-minded executive with extensive experience in defense contracting, McCone certainly could recognize a "white elephant" when he saw one. He was confident that engineers could solve the design problems, but the best explanation for his persistence can be found in the larger fight with the Pentagon over satellite systems. He wanted to keep the OXCART as a CIA equity in case NRO and the "black" Air Force took over space reconnaissance for mainly military requirements.⁹⁹ To McCone, the dispute over the A-12 was another phase in what he perceived would be a protracted interagency conflict over the future of technical intelligence—what its principal purpose was, and which part of the community would control it. With so much at stake, the DCI was not willing to relinquish any program that allowed him to project Agency influence over strategic intelligence collection. (U)

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 313.

⁹⁸ Richelson, *The Wizards of Langley*, 98. (U)

⁹⁹ McCone probably was aware that by mid-1963, the Air Force was trying to wrest control of all OXCART-related programs, except for the A-12, from NRO. Schriever letter to Zuckert, 11 July 1963, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB74.doc, doc. 15. (U)

¹⁰⁰ DCID No. 3/5, "Production of Scientific and Technical Intelligence," 23 April 1965, DCI Files, Job 86T00268, box 2, folder 12.

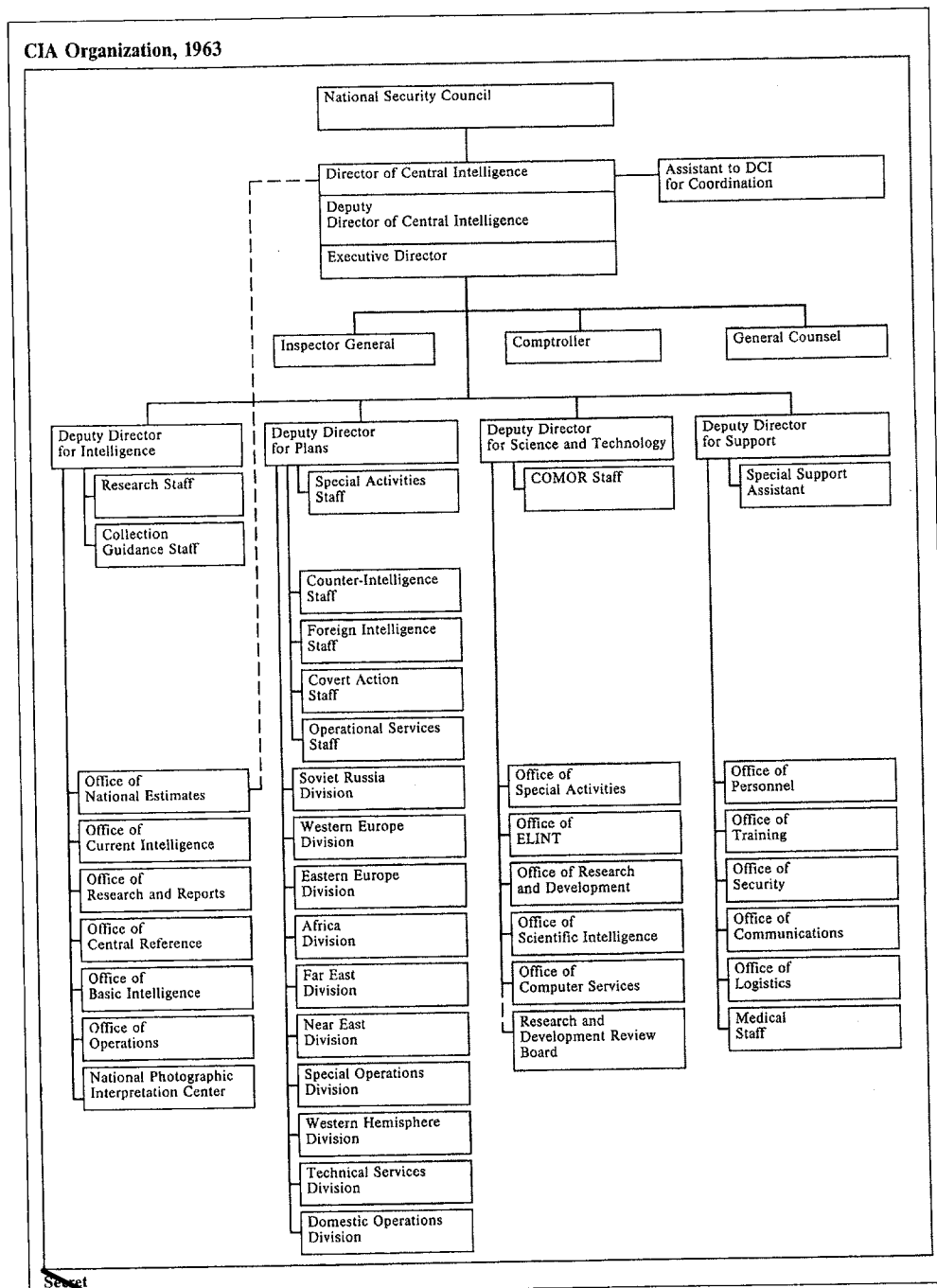
The McCone-Wheelon Legacy (U)

CIA's "chairman of the board" and his "chief technology officer" left the Agency with a science and technology directorate much like the entity James Killian and Edwin Land had called for more than a decade before: a bureaucratically formidable concentration of research, development, collection, and analysis that secured CIA's international preeminence in technical espionage and strategic assessment. McCone and Wheelon permanently changed CIA, giving its science and technology mission equal standing with HUMINT collection and analysis. In one of his last actions as DCI, McCone issued a directive affirming the Agency's role in scientific and technical intelligence as a "service of common concern" for the Intelligence Community.¹⁰⁰ The organizational and administrative changes McCone and Wheelon instituted aided the development of a new generation of satellites that would permit the community to monitor events in denied areas, provide warning to policy-makers, watch unfolding crises, and oversee arms control efforts. The leadership styles and personalities of the DCI and the DDS&T—activist and resolute to their allies, aggressive and intractable to their opponents—helped preserve CIA's role in technical collection. Sometimes, McCone and Wheelon—acting out of bureaucratic parochialism and personal spite—pursued counterproductive short-term objectives at the expense of the general welfare of the US space reconnaissance program. It is not clear, however, that a more conciliatory approach would have accomplished as much against the concerted effort of NRO, the "black" Air Force, and some senior Pentagon officials to take over the NRP for primarily military uses.

Both technically minded outsiders, McCone and Wheelon also effected a culture change at the Agency by diluting the influence of the "bold Easterners," "prudent professionals," and Ivy League intellectuals who had dominated CIA's clandestine and analytical components since their inception. With the emergence of the DS&T, "[n]ew men, with family names unfamiliar to the Eastern establishment, began to move into positions of prominence in the Agency," NPIC analyst Dino Brugioni has written. "They were experts in such disciplines

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as optics, electronics, chemistry, physics, engineering, and photography. Many were World War II veterans, educated under the provisions of the GI Bill.¹⁰¹ OSS veterans, career field operatives, and graduates of elite liberal arts schools still

set the social and intellectual tone at Langley, but the growing emphasis on technical collection and scientific specialization ensured that the Agency would have a more diverse cadre of experts than ever before. (U)

¹⁰¹Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, 65. (U)

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Looking back from the vantage point of nearly a quarter century, McCone expressed some reservations about selecting Wheelon as his head wizard: "I would have been more comfortable with a man that could be more reasonably adjusted to changes." Nevertheless, the structure they developed for the new directorate worked inside and outside the Agency. In 1973, when the DS&T acquired TSD from the

DO and NPIC from the DI, it finally assumed the shape its creators had envisioned. As part of its 40th anniversary commemoration in 2003, the DS&T recognized McCone's contribution by creating the John A. McCone Award to honor CIA employees who creatively and effectively apply science and technology to solving intelligence problems.¹⁰² ~~TS~~

¹⁰² McCone/McAuliffe OH, 44; *The Directorate of Science and Technology: The First 30 Years*, 2.7, 7.8; "DCI Creates Agency-Wide John A. McCone Award...", *What's News*, no. 1206, 18 July 2003. ~~TS~~

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CHAPTER

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Confronting the Main Adversaries (I): The Soviet Union (U)

CIA was created in 1947 as the Cold War began, principally to provide US leaders with strategic warning of hostile attack. Commentators have given prominence to the CIA's covert action roles, but the Agency's main mission during the first 15 years of East-West conflict was to deploy collection and analytic assets to detect and preempt a nuclear Pearl Harbor. No other intelligence topic had greater implications for US survival than Soviet strategic weapons: what kind and how many did Moscow have and how did it intend to use them? The link between intelligence and policy was never clearer or more significant than on these questions. Through the U-2 program, CIA succeeded in the late 1950s in dispelling fears of a "bomber gap" and a crash Soviet nuclear weapons program. (U)

By 1960, however, renewed fear that the Soviet Union would surpass the United States in strategic weaponry—the "missile gap"—and was winning the ideological battle for the Third World helped John F. Kennedy win the presidency. Kennedy was a committed cold warrior, and throughout his brief but eventful administration, he believed the Soviet Union and, to a lesser degree, the People's Republic of China were causing most of the world's instability. During his election campaign he said, "[t]he enemy is the Communist system itself—implacable, unceasing in its drive for world domination." In the speech he planned to give the day he was killed, he described the United States as the "watchman on the walls of world freedom," charged with blunting "the ambitions of international Communism." That adversary was monolithic and expansionist, fed on economic misery and political and social turmoil, and could only be contained through decisive displays of toughness in diplomacy, military action, and intelligence activity.¹ (U)

Discerning Soviet Objectives: CIA Collection and Analysis in the Early 1960s (U)

The clandestine and analytical resources of John McCone's CIA were mobilized in this crisis atmosphere to attack the worldwide communist target—especially the Soviet bloc. Between mid-1963 and mid-1965, approximately [] of the personnel in the DDP were in the Soviet Russia (SR) and Eastern Europe Divisions; nearly [] were running or supporting operations against Iron Curtain countries. Officers in all regional and functional divisions and the CA and CI Staffs spent large parts of their time working against the Soviet Union and its satellites. Overall, nearly [] of the DDP's personnel in the early 1960s was dedicated to the Soviet target directly, and approximately [] worked on Soviet satellite countries (including Cuba), local communist parties, and other Soviet-related targets. Additionally, CIA's clandestine technological capabilities were deployed overwhelmingly against the Soviet Union. During FY 1964, for example, 18 successful CORONA satellite missions covered over [] miles of that country.² ~~(S/NF)~~

On the analytical side, resource allocations during the McCone period are harder to determine because major components of the DI were organized largely along functional, not geographic, lines. For example, in 1965 NPIC, the largest DI component, had [] people distributed among numerous functional components; on average, about [] them worked exclusively on the Soviet bloc target at any given time in the early 1960s. Other DI offices—[]—had the same organizational ambiguity. The latter, for example, had [] on the Soviet Union and Eastern

¹ Kennedy speech in Salt Lake City, 23 September 1960, quoted in Richard J. Walton, *Cold War and Counterrevolution*, 9; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, 1963, 890–98. (U)

² *Annual Report for FY 1964*, 31 and tables following 4, and *Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency (for Fiscal Year 1965)*, 30 September 1965, tables following 1, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 7; DDP staffing charts for 1962–65 in Office of Personnel Files, Job 82-00469R, box 2, folders 1 and 2; Helms memorandum to Executive Director, "Fiscal Year 1964 Foreign Intelligence Plans and Programs," 9 May 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 25. During McCone's directorship, []

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Europe, but an undetermined number of its [redacted] officers at times also dealt with Soviet issues. The situations in ONE and OCI, in contrast, are much clearer. Those offices had branches devoted to Soviet and Bloc affairs, representing [redacted] percent of their personnel [redacted] respectively. The second-largest DI component, ORR, had the highest proportion of staff working on the Soviet target. There, [redacted] of its military and economic analysts [redacted] covered Iron Curtain countries. Directorate-wide, the proportion of DI people dealing with Soviet-related issues as of mid-1965 was around [redacted] [redacted]

ORR did the bulk of the Intelligence Community's military cost analysis during McCone's years at CIA because the new DIA was not yet equipped to do so, but the effort stretched the office very thin. In October 1964, the Pentagon asked the Agency to provide detailed estimates of enemy forces and capabilities, a job DIA still lacked the resources to produce. ORR accordingly undertook comprehensive studies of the effect various scenarios of military expenditures would have on Soviet long-term growth. Concerned about duplication and conflict, McCone and Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance agreed in early 1965 that "studies relating to cost and resource impact of foreign military and space programs...should be more centrally directed, monitored, and evaluated" by CIA. Subsequently, ORR received a hefty increase in staffing.⁴ (U)

Spying on the Enemy (U)

DDP's SR Division underwent major changes during McCone's leadership. The need for the overhaul, instituted during 1963-64 by a new division chief, David Murphy (appointed in August 1963), was evident when McCone became DCI. The HUMINT programs then being emphasized—[redacted]

[redacted] were not producing the quality or quantity of intelligence needed to satisfy policymakers' requirements [redacted]

about Soviet strategic capabilities and intentions. On the other hand, CIA's premier Soviet agents of this period, Pyotr Popov and Oleg Penkovskiy, had shown what valuable intelligence could be acquired from Soviet citizens who were willing to serve as "in place" assets. Consequently, the acquisition of such sources—particularly those stationed in foreign countries, where they were more accessible—became the priority for CIA's Soviet operations during McCone's later years and after. SR Division was rearranged from geographical to functional lines, and the focus of Agency espionage shifted from the Soviet Union proper to the "external" Soviet target worldwide. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] "Coordination and Exploitation of East-West Exchange Program," 25 July 1963, DCI Files, Job 86100268, box 2, folder 12. (S)

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Confronting the Main Adversaries (I): The Soviet Union (U)

To compensate for the limitations on positive intelligence, McCone tried to improve the community's early warning mechanism by authorizing changes in how the USIB Watch Committee and National Indications Center (NIC) functioned. The new procedures, published in 1962,

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responded to a PFIAB suggestion. They included adding personnel to the NIC, establishing a formal link with DIA's Current Intelligence Indications Center to avoid confusion and overlap, and placing the Watch Committee under the direction of the DDCI to improve its responsiveness. In 1963, after the Cuban missile crisis, McCone directed that information about imminent hostilities with the Soviet Union—already reported in the CRITIC (critical intelligence) system—be made available to “responsible action officials in Washington” within 10 minutes. Improving the indications and warning process could only go so far, however, as McCone warned PFIAB. The community still had to rely on “indirect and inferential techniques” for evaluating signs of “abnormal Soviet behavior.” For the foreseeable future, policymakers had to settle for warning judgments based on “less than complete information and...less than full proof of Soviet intentions.”¹⁰

The Acme of Analysis: The Soviet Estimate (U)

All-source intelligence on the Soviet Union in the early 1960s was incorporated into a small library of DI-produced analytical publications. McCone regularly read the most important of these and often asked OCI to prepare special memoranda about Soviet developments. He also was apprised of the judgments of major ORR studies on the Soviet economy and military spending. As chairman of USIB, he oversaw the community's analytic effort and was deeply involved in the preparation of NIEs and SNIEs of the Soviet military, politics, and economy. McCone's close engagement with the estimative process—and in particular, on the Soviet Union—put him in the center of an enterprise steeped in intellectualism and politics. As CIA historian Donald Steury has noted:

the place occupied by national intelligence estimating at the pinnacle of the intelligence process virtually guaranteed that the estimates were prepared in an atmosphere charged with political energy.... NIEs existed at the intersection of analysis, strategy, politics, and (perhaps, most important) military procurement. At this level, a single fact or piece of intelligence could have profound implications for the bureaucratic and resource interests of some institution of the federal

polity.... Nowhere was the tension and complexity of the estimative process more pronounced than in strategic forces analysis.¹¹

Of all the publications that came out of CIA and USIB in McCone's day, none were more fraught with political and economic implications than Soviet estimates. McCone participated in the drafting and adjudication of these assessments more than most DCIs before or since because he combined technical expertise with an intellect that thought in strategic terms. He was at bottom an empiricist who almost always sided with his analysts if their case was persuasive. McCone's attentiveness to the content of these products is well conveyed in a recollection of a former DDI and officer in ONE, R. Jack Smith:

In Allen Dulles's time I had waited with six or eight other officers long hours in his anteroom to discuss our latest estimate, only to find that he had not read it and had only the faintest interest in it.... Our reception by John McCone could not have stood in greater contrast. At four o'clock precisely, he walked into the director's conference room with our estimate in his hand. “I have read your paper,” he said, “and I have just three points I want to discuss.” These three points proved to be the key judgments we had made about the state of the Soviet economy, our view that the Soviet leaders would be guided by caution rather than reckless adventurism, and the numbers we had estimated for one new weapons system. These three points were the very heart of the Soviet estimate. McCone did not oppose them out of hand, but he wanted to be convinced that we had solid data and supporting arguments to buttress our judgment. The discussion was thorough and searching, but after thirty minutes or so the new director pronounced himself satisfied. At no time had he shown any discernible bias. What he brought to bear was a judicious skepticism. We left the session relieved and delighted.¹² (U)

The community produced more estimates on the Soviet Union during the McCone years—one quarter of the

¹⁰ McCone memorandum to Killian, “The Watch Committee of the United States Intelligence Board and the National Indications Center,” 30 April 1962, with attachments, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 12, folder 234; DCID No. 7/1, “Handling of Critical Intelligence,” 25 July 1963, DCI Files, Job 86T00268, box 2, folder 12. This directive defined critical intelligence as “information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation which affects the security or interests of the United States to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President.”

¹¹ [] 64–67, 133–37; [] 37–38; *Intentions and Capabilities*, xviii.

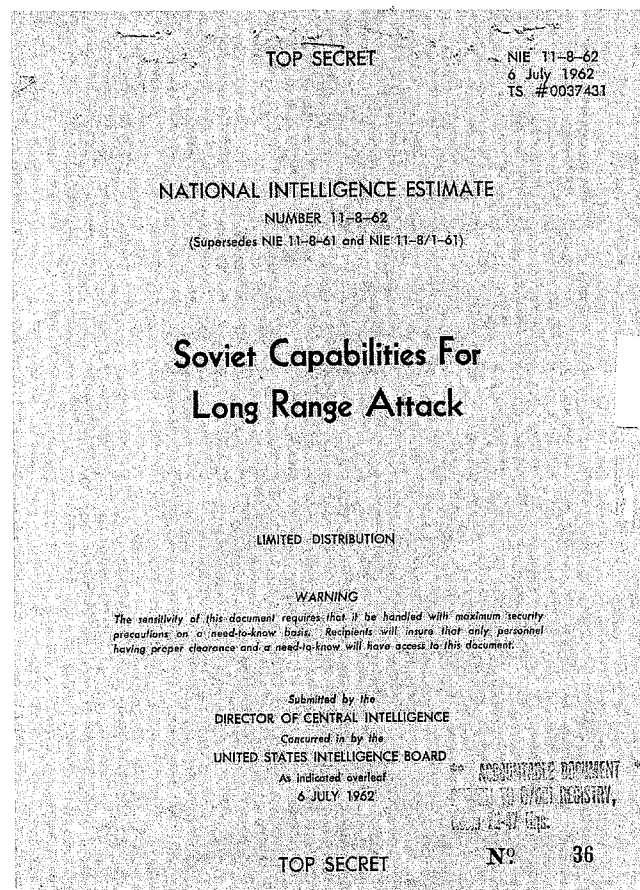
¹² Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 150–51. (U)

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~~SECRET~~*Confronting the Main Adversaries (I): The Soviet Union (U)*

total—than on any other country. This output included comprehensive annual assessments on atomic energy, air and missile defense, military capabilities and policies, strategic weapons, and general purpose forces, as well as periodic estimates on foreign policy, outer space, political and economic problems, science and technology, and Soviet objectives and intentions in specific countries or regions. In addition, USIB occasionally issued SNIEs or “Memoranda to Holders” if breaking developments or new intelligence called for an off-schedule update to a published estimate. McCone at times ordered USIB committees or panels of consultants to prepare special studies on Soviet weapons, and, in the case of air defense and antiballistic missile systems, he initiated a new NIE series on a subject to which policymakers were increasingly attentive. As an important supplement to the intelligence available to ONE, during the Cuban missile crisis and after, McCone gained for CIA access to top secret Pentagon strategic planning documents. He believed that, as DCI, he needed to be informed of US strategic capabilities to put intelligence about Soviet military activities in context.¹³ ~~SECRET~~

During McCone's tenure, ONE institutionalized two important changes in its analytical approach to Soviet military NIEs. Previously ONE had concentrated on estimating force levels, but a RAND Corporation study conducted before McCone's appointment had criticized the assessments for not treating Soviet strategic forces as an integrated system, and for not discussing them as an element of Soviet global strategy. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told McCone that community estimates were not very useful to “action officials” and that he “got very little” from them. A new outline for Soviet military estimates, adopted in 1961, therefore took a “systems approach” compatible with the quantification-heavy concepts used in McNamara's Pentagon. The outline also called for five- to ten-year projections of Soviet military strategy, considerations of likely policy alternatives facing the Kremlin, and analyses of Soviet military expenditures with a more inclusive study of their place in the Soviet Union's political economy. These assessments



The first estimate of Soviet strategic forces published while McCone was DCI (U)

were incorporated into the “Intelligence Assumptions for Planning” that the secretary of defense and the Pentagon used in developing resource allocations for several years ahead. The estimates that McCone reviewed and released as USIB chairman incorporated these themes.¹⁴ ~~SECRET~~

The other change had wide-ranging implications for McCone's role as DCI, for Intelligence Community relations, and, most importantly, for national defense policy. ONE's estimators, eventually joined by counterparts in the

¹³ Lay, vol. 4, 522–23, 533, 546–50; Price, 41. ~~SECRET~~

¹⁴ [redacted] “The Development of Strategic Research at CIA, 1947–1967,” History Staff unpublished manuscript No. MISC-10 (April 1975), 271–73, 275–76; McCone, Memorandum for the Record: Discussion with Secretary McNamara...December 4, 1961,” McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; [redacted] 35–36; *Annual Report for FY 1964*, 66; *Annual Report for FY 1965*, 70. Much of the longer term, quantitative projecting was done by the new Joint Analysis Group (JAG), set up in 1962 with McCone's and McNamara's assent. With members from DIA and CIA (including an officer from ONE), the JAG produced the National Intelligence Projections for Planning (NIPPs), extremely detailed 10-year projections of Soviet (and later, Chinese) forces. The Pentagon used those studies for planning US weapons and personnel requirements. According to one scholar of strategic estimates, intelligence professionals did not regard those products highly. McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, ER 62-1182/1, 26 April 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; [redacted] Lawrence Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 2nd ed., 44–45; [redacted] 36; [redacted] “The Development of Strategic Research at CIA,” 286–89, 302–9. ~~SECRET~~

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Army and Navy (but not the Air Force), shifted from a "worst case" perspective on what the Soviet arsenal could contain to a "most likely" judgment derived from information about actual production rates and ORR's costing analyses. The new methodology led to a different bottom line, reflected in the first Soviet strategic forces estimate of McCone's directorship (NIE 11-8-62, "Soviet Capabilities For Long Range Attack") in July 1962. The new NIE argued that Moscow had not embarked on a crash program that put all its resources into big-payload ICBMs, but instead was developing various sizes and kinds of strategic weapons at a more deliberate pace. The thrust of the estimate's basic judgments was that over the next five years Soviet strategic forces would grow at a slower rate than that of the United States. In short, US strategic superiority would *increase* during the period the NIE covered.¹⁵ ~~X~~

President Kennedy asked that a committee of senior intelligence, foreign policy, and defense officials evaluate the policy implications of this less threatening forecast. Sherman Kent represented CIA; his counterparts were U. Alexis Johnson and Charles Bohlen from the Department of State and Paul Nitze from the Department of Defense. Their report, which McCone, Rusk, McNamara, and JCS Chairman Lemnitzer signed and sent to the White House in late August, concluded that the lowered estimate of Soviet strategic forces did not call for basic changes in US national security policy. Even though the Soviet Union would be more threatening in absolute terms, its leaders would base their actions on their relative inferiority. Behind the rhetoric of "peaceful coexistence," they would continue to test Western resolve and probe for weaknesses, but they would not abandon caution except perhaps if they thought they had obtained a temporary military superiority. This special review reaffirmed the administration's approach and did not contribute to any departures. Nevertheless, it was one of the clearest examples of the nexus between intelligence and policy during McCone's directorship.¹⁶ (U)

¹⁵ Harold P. Ford, *Estimative Intelligence: The Purposes and Problems of National Intelligence Estimating*, 227, 231; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 76-77; [redacted] "The Development of Strategic Research at CIA," 278, 283; [redacted] 206; NIE 11-8-62, "Soviet Capabilities for Long Range Attack," 6 July 1962, *Intentions and Capabilities*, 181-90. See also two ONE memoranda, "Changes in National Intelligence Estimates on Soviet Long-Range Striking Forces," 10 September 1962, and "Changes in National Intelligence Estimates on Soviet ICBM Forces," 21 February 1963, National Security Files, Box 298, Missile Gap 2/63-5/63 File, JFK Library, which explain why the estimates' projections differed from earlier ones. ~~X~~

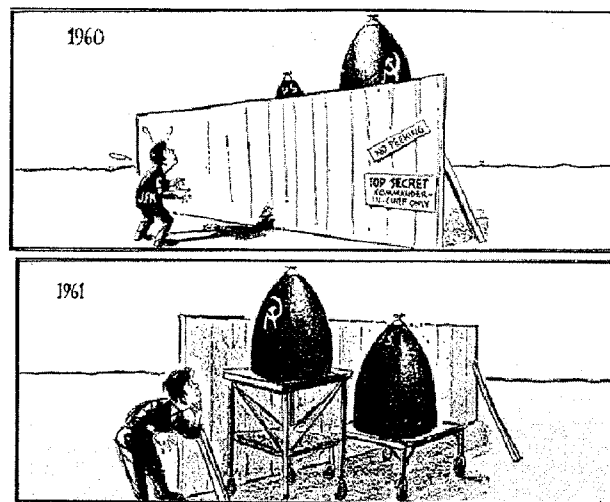
¹⁶ Rusk, McNamara, McCone, and Lemnitzer memorandum to the president, "Report on Implications for US Foreign and Defense Policy of Recent Intelligence Estimates," 23 August 1962, with attached "Report of the Special Inter-Departmental Committee on the Implications of NIE 11-8-62 and Related Intelligence," in Raymond L. Garthoff, *Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking*, 37-53. (U)

¹⁷ Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record: Meeting of the DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...December 28, [1962]...", CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. ~~X~~

The disappearance of the missile gap led to unintended consequences McCone had to address. The sudden swing from strategic inferiority to superiority, he told PFIAB, might produce a sense of complacency in the minds of the American public and its politicians—a sentiment that he regarded as "wrong and dangerous" and that might result in sharp cuts in the national security budget. When briefing Congress, McCone observed, he not only had to highlight intelligence successes but also show what the US government did *not* know about the Soviet threat. He had to do this without sounding alarmist and without implying that the community was not doing its job or was just after more money.¹⁷ ~~X~~

The change in estimative methodology and the new judgments resulting from it forced McCone to confront one of the most serious and recurrent problems in the history of the community's strategic threat assessments: the differences between CIA and Air Force estimates of Moscow's strategic capabilities and intentions. These disagreements at times approached a schism and went well beyond the substance of

MISSILE GAP



A contemporary cartoon suggested the "missile gap" was a Soviet deception. (U)

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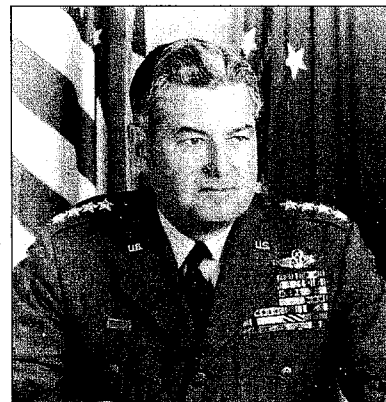
the intelligence and its analysis. The coincidence of national security, bureaucratic competition, budgetary imperatives, political pressures, and intelligence gaps, all existing in the context of an issue of (literally) earth-shaking magnitude, severely tested McCone's management of USIB. (U)

Prior to McCone's tenure, almost without exception, the Agency's estimates of the quantities of Soviet strategic weaponry and its projections of the rate of growth of the Soviet arsenal were lower than those of the Air Force. (Army and Navy estimates were closer to the Agency's.) Since the heyday of the "bomber gap" in the mid-1950s, the Air Force had advanced the most anxious assessments of Soviet strategic power of any service. It continued with similarly overstated projections well into the 1960s, despite intelligence from technical and human sources disproving the existence of a missile gap. Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay and SAC Commander Thomas Power were fervent proponents of the view that the Soviet Union would outstrip the United States in strategic weapons during the decade. Their service, concerned about the survivability of the US bomber and missile force, placed great emphasis on the role of missiles in the Cold War strategic balance. In general, the Air Force believed the combative rhetoric of Soviet leaders and concluded that if a suspect site in Soviet territory conceivably *could* build or house a missile, it *would* do so and must be factored into the projections. Consequently, contention between USIB member departments and the Air Force became more pronounced in the early 1960s. The service's USIB representative routinely dissented from the community's conclusions in the strategic force estimates and often took footnotes objecting to the consensus. In rebuttal, CIA analysts believed Air Force positions were "a matter of SAC policy more than an honest intelligence difference of judgment" and amounted to "propagandizing."¹⁸

Despite his misgivings about Soviet intentions, previous service in the Department of the Air Force, and political connections with California's aerospace contractors, McCone rejected the worst-case scenarios and insisted that

estimates of the Soviet threat be based on what he called "measurables." While he was chairman of the AEC, his agency had agreed with the lower range of projections in Soviet weapons production, based on its estimate of how much fissile material the Soviet Union had. He was critical of civilian and military analysts when they ignored or misinterpreted evidence. Soon after becoming DCI, he privately rebuked both CIA and the Air Force for having promoted the missile gap theory, but he was most critical of the Air Force. He reportedly told the formidable Gen. LeMay that "Air Force Intelligence is the laughing stock of Washington." In late January 1962, he flew to SAC headquarters in Omaha to discuss the Air Force's views with Gen. Power. After hearing SAC and CIA representatives make their cases, McCone and Power agreed to have a team of experts from CIA, SAC, and DIA review all available data to come up with as reliable a list of Soviet strategic installations as possible.¹⁹

This attempt to resolve the differences failed. The Air Force took a footnote in NIE 11-8-62, arguing that the Soviet Union would build twice as many weapons by 1967 as projected in the estimate. In August 1962, McCone wrote to LeMay that he was "seriously shaken" to hear that the Air Force



Curtis LeMay (U)

was accepting and acting on SAC figures that were even higher than those in the footnote. He noted that USIB had vetted SAC's prediction to the Hyland Panel, which had concluded it was unfounded.²⁰ After "a most exhaustive, impartial, and deep study of every scintilla of intelligence available to the community," a majority of USIB departments reached different judgments and projected lower

¹⁸ Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chaps. 4-6, 8; Ford, *Estimative Intelligence*, 229, 231-32; Laqueur, 150; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 66-67; Edgar M. Bottome, *The Missile Gap*, 118-19; "Closing the Missile Gap," in *Central Intelligence: Fifty Years of the CIA*, 125.

¹⁹ Memorandum for the Record...DCI's Briefing of President's Board...9 November 1962..., CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 8, folder 140. Some analysts in CIA's OSI were inclined to think as the Air Force did. Once they concluded that the Soviets were technically able to develop a weapon, they were reluctant to acknowledge that military, economic, or political considerations might prompt Moscow not to move ahead with it. "The Development of Strategic Research at CIA," 297.

²⁰ Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 79; Price, 63 and n. 12; McCone calendars, entries for 22-23 January 1962; McCone letter to Killian, 5 February 1962, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122. A demonstration of the gravity with which the administration viewed the USIB-Air Force dispute was shown by the fact that McCone was accompanied on the trip by the president's military adviser, the director of DIA, and two representatives of PFIAB. Also along were three members of BNE and the heads of the DCI's committee examining the working of USIB and CIA, Lyman Kirkpatrick.

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appear before USIB to present their evidence. They declined the invitation.²¹

McCone never succeeded in gaining Air Force concurrence with a Soviet strategic forces estimate. The service continued taking footnotes, despite accumulating imagery that supported lower projections of Soviet strategic weapons production. In the last such assessment the DCI approved (a Memorandum to Holders in April 1965), the Air Force reduced its numbers somewhat in light of new photography, but there was no way McCone could have fully reconciled the USIB consensus with the Air Force position. LeMay was quoted in late 1964: "I have a very simple view. I think the Russians have more missiles than we have found yet, but the current estimate includes only the missile launchers that we have a picture of." The fundamental difference between McCone, CIA, and most USIB members on one side, and the Air Force (and, depending on the issue, occasionally the Army, DIA, or [redacted] on the other, lay in their respective assessments about Moscow's strategic intentions. The first group believed that the Soviets' principal aim for the balance of the decade was to strengthen their strategic deterrent—to make their nuclear force strong enough that the United States would not dare launch a first strike. The second group judged that the Soviets would not be building up their nuclear force so intensively unless they were seeking parity and, ultimately, superiority through a "counterforce" strategy aimed at destroying US strategic capabilities.

[redacted] Budgetary considerations and interservice rivalries were involved as well. The Air Force's assessments justified the weapons systems it wanted to build or expand, and sometimes its dissents undercut the procurement priorities of the other services. In contrast, CIA believed, the Army's and Navy's occasional divergences from the community consensus were based on "honest differences."²²

The only noteworthy aspect of Soviet strategic estimates on which McCone and the Air Force agreed even temporarily concerned ABMs.²³ The first Soviet ABM facilities had been identified near Leningrad in 1961, and new intelligence indicated that the Soviets might be deploying an extensive ABM system in northwestern Russia. Concern about another "gap" soon seized some quarters of the Kennedy administration's national security apparatus because Soviet ABMs would weaken the nuclear dominance of the United States. This alleged Soviet capability also had direct implications for arms control. McCone and other US officials used it as a rationale for resuming atmospheric tests; thus, the fate of test ban proposals then being discussed in both capitals might be determined if Moscow's reason for expanding its ABM system could be ascertained.²⁴

The evidence indicating what the Soviets were doing was not definitive, however, and led to the guarded judgments of NIE 11-3-62, "Soviet Bloc Air and Missile Defense Capabilities Through Mid-1967," issued in October 1962. Further puzzlement was added when intelligence indicated that the Soviets were abandoning the Leningrad construction

²⁰ The Hyland Panel—also known as the Strategic Advisory Panel—was named for its chairman, Lawrence Hyland, a vice president of Hughes Aircraft. In keeping with its practice begun late in Allen Dulles's directorship, the panel met three times while McCone was DCI (in June 1962, September 1963, and August 1964) to review the yearly estimates on Soviet strategic forces. Some ORR and ONE analysts and the then-chief of OSI, Albert Wheelon, opposed McCone's use of the panel on the grounds that it could not absorb the tremendous amount of intelligence collected and comment knowledgeably on the estimate in the three days it allotted for itself. The DCI disagreed, believing that such groups of outside experts offered a useful check on community assessments [redacted] vol. 6, appendix F.

Although it differed with the Air Force in the abovementioned instance, overall the Hyland Panel reached pessimistic conclusions about Moscow's strategic threat. In August 1964, for example, it described the Soviet weapons program as "alert, dynamic, [and] forward-going...with no slackening of pace" and "on a much more accelerated curve than the Free World." The Soviets were "engaged in an enormous effort to stop or seriously interfere with our overhead surveillance" and were "approaching an anti-satellite capability...that, when achieved, we will be blind." At the same time, the community was "somewhat complacent" in emphasizing the quantity of intelligence collected over its quality, while US policymakers were "not pushing an active [strategic weapons] program and kept looking for the ultimate weapon." The DCI told PFIAB in early 1965 that he shared the panel's fears. Carter memorandum about USIB-Hyland Panel meeting on 1 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 9; Kirkpatrick memorandum about McCone-PFIAB meeting on 4 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 382.

²¹ LeMay letter to McCone, 16 August 1962, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 13; McCone letter to LeMay, 22 August 1962, *ibid.*, box 1, folder 14; Lay, vol. 4, 525–33. The Pentagon from time to time questioned the objectivity of the USIB committees that reviewed and contributed to the drafting of the strategic NIEs. One senior Air Force officer (Gen. George Keegan) complained that McCone "stacked the deck" by appointing CIA officials to chair the committees. Price, 99.

²² Lay, vol. 4, 537–45, vol. 6, 717–25; Kent memorandum to McCone, "Talking Notes for the Director...Service Parochial Interests as Revealed by Dissents to NIEs," 9 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 5; Ford, *Estimative Intelligence*, 232–33; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 79; Botome, 197–98; Desmond Ball, *Politics and Force Levels*, 68–78. By the end of the decade, the Air Force's numbers proved to be more accurate; see below.

²³ General sources used on the ABM issue are Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 152–64; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, chap. 5; Lindgren, 115–17; Price, 81, 89–90; Lay, vol. 4, 546–53, vol. 6, 730–37; and [redacted] "The Development of Strategic Research at CIA," 384–86.

²⁴ McCone, "Memorandum of Meeting with the President...January 17, 1962..." and "Notes on NSC Meeting...February 27, [1962,] Called for Purpose of Discussing Nuclear Test Policy," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1.

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and building installations in Estonia—the so-called “Tallinn Line.” By 1963, the community had become deeply divided over the issue. CIA, the Army, the Navy, and the Department of State maintained that the sites around Tallinn probably were for antiaircraft purposes and not part of an ABM network; they were too small and located in the wrong places to defend Moscow against incoming US warheads. The Air Force, backed by DIA, disagreed and argued that the new facilities were harbingers of an extensive ABM program. To clear up the ambiguities, McCone commissioned two studies—one by the USIB’s Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee, the other by an ad hoc panel of technical experts. ~~XX~~

On the basis of his interpretation of the available intelligence and the findings of the panels, McCone initially sided with the Air Force and DIA. According to a CIA official involved in the debate, the DCI “felt strongly” about the Soviet Union’s potential for building an ABM system. After listening to USIB members argue their positions, he directed that CIA’s draft update of NIE 11-3-62, a Memorandum to Holders in November 1963, be “sharply modified.” Community disagreement on the question persisted well into 1964, as additional imagery did not resolve the mystery of the Tallinn Line. By the time the next NIE in the series came out in December, McCone had stepped back from his conclusion of the year before. NIE 11-3-64, “Soviet Air and Missile Defense Capabilities Through Mid-1970,” used CIA’s more circumspect draft as its main text. As was almost always the case on other issues, the DCI had been argued out of a position on the basis of evidence—or in this case, the lack thereof. After McCone’s departure, the community—~~XX~~

~~XX~~—concluded that the Tallinn complex was intended for antiaircraft defense and was not an ABM system. The Air Force continued to argue, however, that it could be upgraded to defend against missiles. ²⁵ ~~XX~~

By the mid-1960s, the Intelligence Community had detected signs that Khrushchev’s concentration of Soviet military resources on nuclear weapons development at the

expense of conventional forces was producing a “radical change in the nature of the military establishment,” in the words of an April 1965 NIE. “In the mid-fifties, Soviet military theorists concentrated heavily on large-scale campaigns in Europe; by the early sixties they were giving increased attention to the complex problems of intercontinental strategic exchange.” US intelligence services may have differed over force counts and projections, but no member agencies denied that Soviet strategic capabilities were growing at a robust rate. ²⁶ (U)

McCone did not let the estimates speak for themselves about what he termed Moscow’s “dynamic military effort.” He met with senior policymakers several times in the latter part of 1964 to press the point. In August, he notified cabinet-level officials that the Soviets had embarked “not on a crash program but [on] a consistently expanding one, despite public statements designed to mislead world opinion.” This “dynamic expansion” encompassed testing new ICBM systems (the SS-9 and SS-10), expanding capacity to produce fissile material (including construction of more than a dozen new reactors), building new nuclear submarines and converting older models, and enlarging aircraft factories. In September, he warned Rusk that as Soviet delegates were discussing arms control in Geneva, intelligence showed that Moscow was testing new and larger missiles and building more hardened launchers for ICBMs and more radar sites. At the end of the year, McCone briefed President Johnson on the latest NIE 11-8. According to all-source intelligence, the Soviet Union’s military program was “dynamic, progressive...not being cut back...sophisticated...[and] directed toward quality rather than quantity.” That trend raised the prospect of “a breakthrough...which would redress the present balance of power,” but, on the basis of available evidence, the community judged that the Soviet Union was not working toward a first-strike capability. ²⁷ ~~XX~~

Translated into policy, this assessment—which McCone conveyed in open congressional testimony in February 1965—justified the Johnson administration’s decision to upgrade the quality of American strategic forces but not

²⁵ [redacted] 89 and n. 51; Lay, vol. 4, 553–55 [redacted] 116; [redacted]

[redacted] “Ferrets Above,” 462–63. ~~XX~~

²⁶ NIE 11-4-65, “Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy,” 14 April 1965, *Intentions and Capabilities*, 163. (U)

²⁷ “Memorandum of Conversation...Recommended Content of a Joint Statement Relating to a Reduction of Military Expenditures...,” 12 August 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XI, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 93–94; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Rusk...,” 13 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13; NIE 11-8-64, “Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack,” November 1964, Gerald K. Haines and [redacted] eds., *CIA’s Analysis of the Soviet Union, 1947–1991*, 142ff.; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President...,” 12 December 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XIV, *The Soviet Union*, 201; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Briefing of President Johnson...,” December 28, 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 10; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Senator Russell—7 January 1965,” *ibid.*, box 2, folder 15. ~~XX~~

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increase their number substantially. As McNamara stated in April 1965: "[T]he Soviets have decided that they have lost the quantitative race, and they are not seeking to engage us in that contest.... [T]here is no indication that the Soviets are seeking to develop a strategic nuclear force as large as ours." That was a serious miscalculation. After the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev had vowed that the Soviet Union would never again be put in a position in which the United States could force it into concessions because of its military inferiority, and a massive conventional and nuclear buildup began in the mid-1960s. The "collective leadership" that ousted Khrushchev in October 1964 accelerated the nuclear program so rapidly that by 1969, the Soviet Union had reversed the strategic imbalance of the early 1960s, overtaken the United States in ICBMs, developed a secure second-strike capability, and may have been pursuing the capacity to launch a first strike. The Intelligence Community recognized but consistently understated these developments in its estimates starting in mid-decade—largely owing to its overstatement of the Soviet strategic threat in previous years.²⁸ (U)

The Nuclear Test Ban Revisited (U)

The test ban issue provides one of the clearest examples of McCone's work at the intersection of intelligence and policy. As chairman of USIB, he oversaw the community's collection and analytical activities on the Soviet strategic program—including their research and development of new weapons; as a member of the Kennedy administration's Committee of Principals, he helped formulate US policy on arms control. A clash between intelligence objectivity and policy advocacy was always possible. McCone disagreed with the administration's judgment that the United States was better off with a test ban even if the Soviets cheated, and he rigorously opposed a treaty that could not be monitored. As he did at other times on other issues, McCone insinuated himself into the policy debate early in the Kennedy administration, after he left the AEC and was a private citizen with

no official connection to the issue. According to his successor Glenn Seaborg, after McCone received a briefing in 1961 from John McCloy, the president's arms control adviser, he called Seaborg and said "he was very disturbed because throughout the discussion there was a kind of feeling that it wasn't important to do any testing. He said that if the Geneva negotiations broke down, as seemed likely, he would oppose our just standing still. He seemed to feel very strongly about this."²⁹ After McCone became DCI, he even threatened (quietly) to resign over the issue. (U)

By the time John F. Kennedy became president, he had established a public record in favor of a treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons.³⁰ Upon taking office, he ordered a full review of the US government's position on a test ban. His proposed revisions were limited in scope, however, and, for several reasons, generally followed the framework he inherited from the Eisenhower administration. Lacking an electoral mandate, he was constrained by the positions of powerful congressional opponents of a test ban. Western allies, especially the United Kingdom, were content with the direction of US policy at the time. Lastly, the scientific assumptions on which the previous administration had based its position had not changed by 1961. (U)

During Kennedy's first two years in office, both the US and the Soviet governments said one thing about nuclear testing but did another. Despite professed commitments to reducing strategic weapons and, in Washington's case, definite bureaucratic moves in that direction—the creation of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) in September 1961 and the appointment of the more "détentist" Seaborg to replace McCone at the AEC—the United States and the Soviet Union expanded their arsenals and resumed underground and atmospheric testing, ending a three-year moratorium. (U)

Moreover, the superpowers were far from agreement on how to implement a test ban—in particular over how to ver-

²⁸ Howard Margolis, "Red Armed Policy Seen Like US's," *Washington Post*, 2 February 1965, McCone clipping file, HIC; Patrick Glynn, *Closing Pandora's Box*, 215–16; Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, chap. 12; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 101–15; *Intentions and Capabilities*, 139–40; Ball, *Politics and Force Levels*, 57; Harland B. Moulton, *From Superiority to Parity*, 242–43; Lindgren, 112. (U)

²⁹ Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 63. (U)

³⁰ Sources for this introductory discussion are: Divine, *Blowing On the Wind*, 316–17, 331; Firestone, 82–85; Giglio, 77, 216; Glynn, 183; Jacobson and Stein, 327; Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Question*, 159–67; Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate*, chaps. 1–2; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 472–73, 495; NIE 4-2-61, "Attitudes of Key World Powers on Disarmament Issues," 6 April 1961, SNIE 11-9-61, "The Possibility of Soviet Nuclear Testing During the Moratorium," Harold Brown (Department of Defense), "Questions Bearing Upon the Resumption of Atomic Weapons Testing," 15 May 1961, "Report of the Ad Hoc Panel on Nuclear Testing" (the Panofsky Panel), 21 July 1961, Maxwell Taylor memorandum to the president, "Intelligence Aspects of Nuclear Testing," 8 September 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 35–37, 48–51, 60, 106–7, 168–69; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion at National Security Council Meeting...", 28 March 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1. (U)

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ify compliance. Washington, which did not know whether the Soviets were violating the testing moratorium with secret underground experiments, anticipated "cheating" and wanted at least 10 on-site inspections of nuclear facilities each year. Moscow argued that any more than three would constitute espionage. Khrushchev also wanted a test ban linked to general disarmament, which Kennedy thought should follow a treaty on testing. The last major difference concerned accountability. The Soviet leader, jaded on the United Nations, favored treaty oversight by a tripartite commission representing Western, neutral, and communist nations equally. President Kennedy opposed that arrangement because the requirement for unanimity would subject American positions to a Soviet veto. He insisted that, whatever the membership of the commission, it be able to conduct inspections whenever it wanted. (U)

The interplay between intelligence and policy that McCone as DCI had to manage was most apparent in the issues of monitoring and verification. Monitoring is an intelligence function that involves observing behavior, counting weapons, and measuring tests. Verification is a policy issue comprising an official judgment, based on empirical monitoring intelligence but replete with diplomatic and security implications, that a country is or is not complying with treaty obligations. (U)

McCone dealt with both matters. As the national intelligence officer of the US government, he did not want to be put in the position of monitoring agreements with sources and methods he did not believe were fully up to the task. Human and technical sources could not produce definitive intelligence about Soviet strategic forces, nor could they show for certain whether Moscow was abiding by the treaty. To provide data for verifying compliance, McCone wanted a treaty that required many on-site inspections. If it did not contain that provision for intelligence collection, then as a policy matter he would advise the administration not to accept it. When a proposed treaty without an extensive inspection regime appeared to be emerging from negotiations, McCone expressed his disapproval guardedly, but he knew the president and other arms control supporters would persist and saw no point in trying to obstruct them. Doing so would only damage his relations with the administration, probably irreparably. Quite to the contrary, after the treaty was signed, he worked to persuade the Senate to ratify

it. Afterward, he stepped back from the nuclear decision-making circle and concentrated on assuring that the community adequately monitored Soviet compliance—an ostensibly policy-neutral enterprise that actually was laden with policy implications. (U)

As the Kennedy administration formulated its diplomatic strategy for achieving a test ban, McCone maintained the same skepticism and caution he had shown while heading Eisenhower's AEC. He saw his role as that of the experienced realist trying to moderate the New Frontiersmen's noble intentions—which, by his thinking, at times bordered on naïveté—with a healthy dose of concerned objectivity. He did not trust the Soviets and had little confidence in monitoring regimes that did not include on-site inspection. He did not believe that intelligence sources and methods—whether imagery, signals intercepts, or agent reporting—could replace on-the-ground examination of test sites, and he thought most disarmament proposals were quixotic. Moscow's basic position, as he later characterized it, was "after you [the United States] disarm[,] we can have any kind of an inspection you want."³¹

In his first statement on the subject after becoming DCI, McCone advised senior policymakers in mid-December 1961 (shortly after the Geneva test ban conference reconvened) that the United States should not "exchange moral leadership for proper security forces." The administration needed to resume atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons to maintain superiority over the Soviet Union. During the three-year moratorium, he claimed, the Soviets had made a "quantum jump" in nuclear technology and possessed weapons as sophisticated as those of the United States in most areas and more so in others. Meanwhile, the AEC had turned much of its attention from weapons development toward peaceful applications of nuclear energy, and American nuclear scientists had moved into other endeavors; as a result, US laboratories were left poorly prepared to respond to a new Soviet testing program. During the next few months, McCone advised the administration to take seriously Soviet advances in ABM development, and directed senior Agency managers to monitor proposed disarmament treaties to ensure that US negotiators "kept uppermost in mind the absolute necessity for inspection procedures which are workable and as foolproof as possible."³²

³¹ [redacted] (CIA) memorandum, "Meeting of the Committee of Principals, 8 July 1963," *FRUS, 1961-1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 773; transcript of McCone meeting with Adrian Fisher (ACDA), 23 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10.

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subterranean tests alone. Moreover, McCone insisted, pursuing a test ban would spell an end to the program for developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy (called PLOWSHARE) because monitoring systems could not distinguish between tests for weapons or for other purposes. "[W]e must choose between a test ban or our PLOWSHARE program.... [W]e cannot have both."³⁴ ~~X~~

The formal venue in which McCone dealt with the test ban was the Committee of Principals, established in 1958 by President Eisenhower to coordinate the US government's review of arms control and disarmament policy. The Committee originally had six members: the secretaries of state and defense, the chairman of the AEC, the president's national security and science advisers, and the DCI. During the Kennedy administration, the chairman of the JCS and the directors of USIA and ACDA joined the group. Other officials attended meetings depending on the subjects under discussion; usually around two dozen or more people were present. The committee met sporadically, sometimes not for weeks or months at a time. (U)

At first, McCone doubted that the US and Soviet governments could overcome their differences over inspections. As he pointed out to the NSC, the Soviets had reversed their position since 1959, when Khrushchev had told Eisenhower that he would permit inspections. Even if the superpowers compromised—for example, by prohibiting atmospheric tests while permitting them underground—McCone questioned whether such an agreement would halt proliferation, one of the long-term goals of a test ban treaty. Any nation that wanted to develop nuclear weapons (he mentioned West Germany, India, Japan, and Israel) could do so with

McCone attended 13 meetings of the committee while he was DCI, most during his first two years when the issue of nuclear weapons was most salient. His level of participation varied. At some meetings he said nothing; at some he confined himself to intelligence questions; and at others he discussed negotiating postures and policy strategies. McCone regularly drew on the knowledge of the Soviet nuclear program he had gained as AEC chairman and occasionally on his experiences as a defense contractor during World War II and under secretary of the Air Force during

³² McCone untitled memorandum about 18 December 1961 meeting at the Department of State, and Herbert Scoville, "Memorandum for the Record...State Department Meeting on 18 Dec. 1961....," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Bundy, "Memorandum of the 497th Meeting of the National Security Council," 27 February 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 336; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Proposed Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament," 6 April 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 330. ~~X~~

³⁴ "Minutes of Meeting of the National Security Council," 28 March 1962, and "Memorandum of Meeting with President Kennedy...Disarmament Proposals," 27 July 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 413, 512; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record, Meeting of Principals," 26 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum of NSC Meeting," 27 July 1962, *ibid.*, box 6, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of Principals...17 April 1963....," *ibid.*, box 2, folder 6. ~~X~~

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1950–51. Among numerous examples, he counseled ACDA Director Foster to make sure that any disarmament treaty not require the United States to close down defense contractors' facilities. In a command economy like the Soviet Union's, factories were kept running even at a very low level of production so they could be brought up to full output on short notice. McCone had noticed this characteristic of Soviet military plants when he toured Russia in 1959. In contrast, "our society does not seem to have the capability of doing these things."

When we were required to start up reserve plants after the outbreak of the Korean War, it proved to be both a laborious and time-consuming undertaking. I was disappointed in those days to find idle aircraft, engine, tank, and armament plants, which had been maintained for years to provide instant mobilization potential, not usable until large amounts of money had been spent and a great deal of time consumed in re-equipping, modifying, etc.... You must find some way in your negotiations to safeguard us against such a disadvantageous position.³⁵ ~~XX~~

On another occasion, McCone suggested that the administration exploit intelligence about a possible new Soviet weapons systems for propaganda gains. After the community learned that Moscow had developed an ABM capability, he advised the Department of State that disclosure of such information "would have [a] profound effect on world opinion." It would show that the peaceful pronouncements of Soviet leaders were disingenuous; they had constructed a defensive screen behind which their menacing offensive buildup continued unabated. US revelation of what the Kremlin had done "could not, in my opinion, be countered any more successfully than we were able to counter the importance of Sputnik I or the first man in space." However, the DCI—who earlier had failed to persuade the president to start a Manhattan Project for a US antiballistic missile—had no more success with this suggestion.³⁶ ~~XX~~

McCone also was a member of a short-lived group of officials, at the deputies level and below, that planned a program to explain and justify the US government's resumption of atmospheric testing. The group was a subcommittee of

the NSC's Committee on Atmospheric Testing, which made detailed policy decisions on such tests. The DCI and his colleagues recommended that the administration not adopt "a defensive or apologetic attitude" toward the resumed testing and instead, to forestall opposition, give a forceful presentation of its decision just before the first explosion.³⁷ (U)

Resisting the Arms Control Advocates (U)

The United States and the Soviet Union continued their diplomatic fencing over the test ban until the Cuban missile crisis of October–November 1962, when Kennedy and Khrushchev realized how quickly and easily superpower conflicts could escalate. Slow movement toward a test ban occurred in late 1962 and 1963 amid what one historian has called "the interplay between relief and suspicion." American public opinion, influenced by the anxieties of the "Thirteen Days," strongly favored a test ban, and Kennedy was frustrated that nuclear proliferation was diminishing his ability to influence international affairs—"a world in which there are large quantities of nuclear weapons is an impossible world to handle," he told the British foreign secretary. Washington and Moscow feared that communist China was close to developing its own atomic weapon, and Kennedy believed that the superpowers needed to cooperate to delay or prevent that from happening. According to AEC Chairman Seaborg, that fear was the "principal driving force" behind the president's pursuit of a treaty. Kennedy also calculated that a US-Soviet agreement would weaken the international communist movement by worsening tensions between Moscow and Beijing, and he resolved to stabilize the nuclear situation so the United States could confront the Soviet Union more aggressively and flexibly in other areas. With the removal of the missiles from Cuba, the Soviets had come to accept the principle of international verification, and even the traditional obstacle to a treaty—on-site inspection—seemed surmountable after Kennedy indicated he was willing to accept fewer inspections and permit underground testing. Finally, a ban on above-ground testing would impede the Soviets more than the United States. Even though the United States had fewer high-yield weapons (which required atmospheric testing) than the Soviets, the administration concluded that developing more low-yield weapons (which could be tested underground) had greater strategic value.³⁸ (U)

³⁵ McCone letter to Foster, 6 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14. ~~XX~~

³⁶ McCone letter to George C. McGhee (chairman, Policy Planning Council, Department of State), 13 April 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 162–63. ~~XX~~

³⁷ Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 133n; Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate*, 67. (U)

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Talks at a five-year-old multinational disarmament conference in Geneva resumed in late 1962, but few observers expected any immediate accomplishment. Meanwhile, influential advocates of the unlimited development of nuclear weapons—notably physicist Edward Teller—insisted that the United States should develop a 100-megaton warhead as soon as possible. Aware of McCone's earlier opposition to a test ban, Teller met with the DCI to present his case that such a powerful device was needed to defeat a Soviet ABM system. Presumably he hoped that McCone would press the point in policymaking circles. Replying cautiously, the DCI recommended that the controversial Teller refrain from speeches and television appearances and not raise the nuclear issue's public profile right then. The administration's policy, McCone assured him, was under careful review, and Teller would be consulted before any decision was reached.³⁹

McCone did not like the course the review appeared to be taking. He especially worried that the administration might be "reckless" in seeking a disarmament breakthrough without making sure it could be verified. A prohibition on testing would keep the United States from improving its nuclear weapons without guaranteeing that the Soviets would not cheat. "There is a great danger," he wrote, "of engaging in a treaty, living under it for a number of years, and permitting our laboratories to go downhill (which they undoubtedly would do) while the Soviets covertly pursue developments in their laboratories." The DCI also feared that such a treaty would not prevent weapons development by certain nations that, in his judgment, probably would not sign it or, if they did, would not abide by its restrictions—notably France, China, Israel, and India. Although any progress in nuclear disarmament theoretically would lessen world tensions, "stopping testing does not slow down the arms race, does not remove the dangers of a nuclear holocaust, and does not end the proliferation problem."

"The Russians could no longer handle the Chinese situation," he told the president, "and we and the British could no longer handle the de Gaulle situation, and hence the proliferation problem."⁴⁰

In February 1963, McCone told the president of his strong reservations about the concessions American negotiators had made and predicted that the treaty then taking shape would run into trouble in Congress. "[T]he people on the Hill are concerned about the continual lowering of our numbers.... [A]t one time [James] Killian argued that 100 on-site inspections per year was the absolute minimum." Now, however, the administration was considering whether to accept fewer than a dozen. Kennedy agreed with the DCI's assessment of congressional attitudes but indicated that the "China problem," as he put it, was the only reason for pursuing the test ban. He questioned the need for the United States to develop any other nuclear weapons besides an ABM system—to which McCone, aware of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory's interest in a sizable series of tests,

³⁸ Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate*, 136, 138, 150–51; Giglio, 217; Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 181; Firestone, 56–57, 67–68, 109; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 893–94; "Editorial Note," *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXII, *Northeast Asia*, 341. (U)

³⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Dr. Teller," 12 November 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 3. McCone did not disapprove of developing a 100-megaton weapon on principle and believed that it had significant military value. When the JCS in mid-1963 requested development of a high-yield bomb to be dropped from a B-52, the DCI opposed the idea because the delivery system was vulnerable—not because the bomb was, as an ACDA official called it, a "horror weapon." McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion on the Development of a High-Yield Nuclear Weapon....," 21 May 1963, and "ACDA Position on US Development of Very High Yield Weapons," 12 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 706–7, 794–95.

⁴⁰ McCone untitled memorandum, 8 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 668–70; ACDA memorandum to Committee of Principals, "US Position for a Test Ban Treaty," 17 February 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3 (McCone's marginal jottings on his copy—especially the frequent question marks—clearly convey his doubts about the US position); McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with William Foster....," 8 February 1963, and untitled memorandum, 8 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 637–39, 668–70; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...4 April 1963," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4. McCone discussed Israel's nuclear program several times with Kennedy administration principals. See, e.g., *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XVIII, *Near East*, 1962–1963, 437, 528, 589–91.

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took exception. Indicating that the laboratory directors felt unrepresented at the White House, McCone recommended that the president meet with them—a suggestion with which Kennedy readily agreed.⁴² ~~XXXX~~

McCone had recurrent run-ins with William Foster and ACDA.⁴³ He believed Foster wanted a treaty almost for its own sake, and he suspected that ACDA was interested in building its own mechanism (mainly with contract studies) for producing finished intelligence on arms control outside USIB channels. McCone did not believe he could allow that “rather dangerous practice,” as he termed it. ACDA was a consumer of intelligence, not a producer. With an institutional interest in a test ban, it might make assessments on strategic forces that could lead the administration to sign a “bad” agreement. He also did not want ACDA dealing with USIB members on its own. “[I]nformation received could very easily be misleading and representative of a unilateral department viewpoint,” he wrote to Foster. “This would be most particularly true of Defense, since DIA was responsive to the JCS, and the JCS had definite unanimous and stated opinions on all of ACDA’s activities.” ~~XXXX~~

At the same time, McCone did not want to give the impression that he was trying to undercut ACDA by raising bureaucratic obstacles to its work or by not providing it with the intelligence he was required to under executive order. Doing so might suggest that McCone was letting his personal skepticism about arms control influence his management of the intelligence process. To accomplish all these objectives, McCone made sure that CIA provided ACDA with full support and served as its contact with the community. He designated a senior DI officer ~~XXXX~~ of ORR) to serve as the Agency’s liaison to ACDA, and, in his capacity as USIB chairman, he established protocols for ACDA contacts with USIB members. ~~XXXX~~

Besides using the bureaucracy, McCone also attempted to apply private pressure to slow momentum for a test ban. He

told McGeorge Bundy in April 1963 that he was most anxious not to have to oppose a test ban treaty; in fact, as long as he was in the administration, he would not do so openly. In view of his private convictions and past public statements, however, he could not support a test ban as currently envisaged. Perhaps, McCone suggested, he should resign. Well aware of the repercussions, especially among the DCI’s congressional allies, Bundy headed him off, reminding McCone that he had already made his position clear to the president and that, in any case, the entire issue lay outside his competence as DCI. Should McCone need political insulation, Bundy added, he would provide it. Following this discussion, McCone did not play the resignation card again.⁴⁴ ~~XXXX~~

Perhaps knowing how McCone had publicly undercut the Eisenhower administration’s support for a test ban, President Kennedy made sure that would not happen again. In May 1963, he “reinforced” with McCone what the DCI should and should not say in his upcoming testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee’s Preparedness Subcommittee. Its chairman, John Stennis, opposed a test ban, and the White House worried that McCone’s answers to his questions might embolden opponents of a treaty. The DCI stuck to the script he was given, and afterward the president praised him for the “firmness and clarity with which you explained why you did not wish to complicate your professional task by discussing your personal opinion on policy issues outside your official responsibility.” “I knew that when you and I discussed this matter,” Kennedy added, “that this was the right stand to take, but what I know now is that it was effective[,] too. Many thanks.”⁴⁵ (U)

Movement Toward a Treaty (U)

Following signs of progress in bilateral relations in other areas during the first months of 1963, Khrushchev received a communication from President Kennedy and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in May spelling out a new joint initiative to stop nuclear testing and prevent further proliferation. Khrushchev’s testy reply was hardly

⁴² Editorial note about McCone meeting with the president on test ban policy, 8 February 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 646; McCone, “Memorandum of Meeting with the President...20 February 1963,” McCone Papers, box 6, folder 3; Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 188.

⁴³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Mr. William Foster...,” 18 April 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 6; ~~XXXX~~ Strategic Research at CIA, 311-16-~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ The Development of

⁴⁴ Elder, “McCone as DCI (1987),” 173–74; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 31. ~~XXXX~~

⁴⁵ President Kennedy letter to McCone, 24 May 1963, *JFK Wants to Know*, 267. Historian John Prados has written that McCone detailed an Agency analyst to the Senate Armed Services Committee during the summer of 1963 to help Stennis develop a case against the treaty. According to Elder, however, Stennis requested that CIA send an expert to assist the committee staff with technical details, and that the analyst went with clear instructions not to take sides on the treaty issue. Prados, *The Soviet Estimate*, 154; Elder, “McCone as DCI (1987),” 174. (U)

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encouraging and fed continued opposition from powerful members of Congress to any form of test ban treaty. A poll of senators taken that month found only 57 supported a treaty that followed the administration's proposals—10 fewer than needed for ratification. In his reply to Khrushchev's missive, Kennedy ignored the Soviet leader's invective and focused instead on the one positive suggestion—that American and British emissaries go to Moscow for talks. Kennedy also decided it was time to give a major "peace" address. His landmark speech on 10 June at American University paved the way for test ban negotiations to begin in the Soviet capital in July. Signaling his seriousness, the president chose the venerable, tough-minded W. Averell Harriman to lead the US delegation.⁴⁶ (U)

In the weeks before the talks began, the administration worked on resolving internal policy differences and formulating negotiating tactics. McCone confronted some of the arguments for an agreement, and evidence of possible Soviet tests enabled him to question the ban's enforceability. Among other points, he staunchly opposed using the planned multinational nuclear force as a bargaining chip to win agreement on a nonproliferation treaty. He believed the security of Western Europe depended on creation of such a missile force as a deterrent against several hundred Soviet offensive missiles. Moreover, McCone thought the United States should not sign an agreement that prevented the British and French from improving their own nuclear deterrents. Otherwise, the United States would be forced to defend Europe unilaterally for decades to come. When Secretary Rusk privately suggested that the treaty would "save the world billions and billions of dollars" in military expenditures, the DCI responded that he "could not see how the treaty in itself stopped the arms race, because it did not inhibit the scientific research and development in arms nor stop [the] manufacture of arms." "The point," he added for the record, "was apparently dismissed."

⁴⁶ "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union," DEPTTEL 2590, 30 May 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 707–10; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 898–904; Scaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 211–18; Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate*, 185–90; Mandelbaum, 172–76. (U)

⁴⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of The Principals," 21 June 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at Meeting of Principals, 14 June [1963]," *ibid.*, box 1, folder 1. McCone came very close to submitting a formal dissent in early July. In a draft memorandum to McNamara, he asserted that a test ban would put the United States at a permanent disadvantage in large, high-yield weapons while enabling the Soviet Union to build defenses against the smaller, less destructive American devices. It does not appear that the DCI sent a final version of the document to the secretary of defense. McCone, "Comments on Conclusions of the White Papers...on Nuclear Testing Problems," 2 July 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 759–60.

In late June, the DCI approved an estimate that included this judgment: "Communist China would almost certainly refuse to sign [a treaty], and French and Israeli adherence would be doubtful."⁴⁷

McCone commented privately that despite his and the JCS's opposition, it was "[o]bvious to me...that the thrust of opinion [elsewhere in the administration] was in favor of reaching [an] agreement even though consideration [sic; considerable] concessions would have to be made." For bureaucratic cover, he wanted the record to reflect that he had not formally registered a view on the treaty. "At no time," he wrote after a meeting of the Committee of Principals, "did I express support of the treaty. At no time was I asked my opinion concerning the treaty.... That I opposed the treaty...was not within my province to express myself"—not that anyone in the administration had any doubt about where he stood.⁴⁸

In early July, the NSC instructed Harriman to seek a comprehensive ban but, if one were unattainable, to settle for a prohibition on atmospheric, oceanic, and space testing. A test ban, the NSC asserted, was in the national interest, both as a precedent for solving other international problems and as a first step toward curtailing nuclear proliferation. McCone knew that from an intelligence standpoint the second point was debatable, but at this late stage in the process he declined the president's invitation to comment.⁴⁹

When Harriman arrived in Moscow in mid-July he found that, despite the Soviets' history of opposing a limited test ban, Khrushchev wanted one. While the negotiators talked, most of the Committee of Principals met at the

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White House each evening to monitor developments as Harriman reported them and to revise the US delegation's instructions accordingly. McCone did not attend all of those sessions, but, as one of a small group of top officials outside the White House cleared to read Harriman's cables from Moscow (hand-delivered and marked "FOR YOUR EYES ONLY"), McCone kept abreast of the talks' progress.⁵⁰ (U)

After 11 days of intense negotiations, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union reached a preliminary accord on 25 July. They signed the "Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water" on 5 August. The agreement—more commonly known as the Limited Test Ban Treaty—prohibited signatories from conducting nuclear explosions in those environments. Underground testing could continue, however, and the reduction of nuclear stockpiles was not addressed. Communist China was left unchecked; it refused to sign the treaty, and the Soviet Union would not agree to take joint action with the United States against Beijing's nuclear program. An "escape clause" allowed signatories to withdraw from the treaty if they thought their national interests were threatened, and no supranational oversight body was established.⁵¹ (U)

McCone's status as a former AEC chairman and prominent Republican made him an asset to the White House in securing ratification of the treaty. Short of resigning, the DCI had no option but to support the accord. His prior record on the issue aside, he served in an administration determined to move ahead in arms control, and, with improved monitoring technology available to the United States, he found opposing a limited test ban to be politically, and to some degree technically, untenable. Moreover, in the time since McCone headed the AEC, two important issues had been, in his judgment, resolved. First, the United States did not need large megaton weapons, which could only be

tested in the atmosphere, to preserve its strategic advantage. It could accomplish the same with more, smaller-yield warheads that could be tested underground. Second, an effective ABM system could be developed without further above-ground testing. Consequently, McCone told Congress, he endorsed the treaty with the proviso that

we pursue underground testing, that we keep our laboratories vital, that we plan a comprehensive atmospheric program, anticipating that the Soviets will violate the treaty, and that we maintain our proving grounds [in the Pacific region] in a state of readiness at all times. I have always supported an atmospheric test ban, but contrast this sharply to a comprehensive test ban with [an] inadequate verification system.⁵² ~~NY~~

Closing the case for the treaty, McCone added that a test ban served the national interest because it at least partly reduced the proliferation of weapons and represented a diplomatic achievement between the superpowers. He was less sure about those advantages, however, and wanted to keep administration officials from being lulled into a false sense of security. CIA, he informed the NSC, had no hard evidence that Khrushchev's conciliatory moves were anything but tactical calculations. McCone questioned "the current happy relationship" with the Soviet premier; "I think there is a lot of illusion...in Washington today...we don't seem to have very much to pin our hopes on, except for a lot of polemics."⁵³ ~~NY~~

Most of the American people and the Congress wanted a test ban, and a lobbying campaign—in large degree orchestrated from the White House—overcame most opposition from congressional conservatives, military leaders, and disarmament champions who thought a partial ban did not go far enough. President Kennedy again used McCone as an emissary to Capitol Hill and the Republican Party. He had the

⁴⁹ "Summary Record of the 515th Meeting of the National Security Council," 9 July 1963, and "Instructions for Honorable W. Averell Harriman," 10 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 779–88; Knoche untitled memorandum to McCone, 9 July 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Meeting...on 9 July 1963," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 5. ~~NY~~

⁵⁰ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 734–35; McCone calendars, entries for July 1963; Firestone, 108; "Memorandum of Conference with President Kennedy," 23 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, VII, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 835–37; messages to and from the negotiators in *ibid.*, 799–863; Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 237. The other cleared officials were Rusk, McNamara, Foster, Under Secretary of State George Ball, and Llewelyn Thompson, a former ambassador to the Soviet Union then serving as ambassador-at-large. (U)

⁵¹ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 905–9; Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, 302–6; Oliver, *Kennedy, Macmillan, and the Nuclear Test-Ban Debate*, 211–13; Mandelbaum, 177–78. (U)

⁵² "DCI Talking Paper re Test Ban," 26 July 1963, McCone responses to questions from Senate Armed Services Committee, 29 July 1963, and McCone memorandum, "DCI Position on Test Ban Treaty," 16 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; "CIA, Air Force Leaders Back A-Test Treaty," *New York Times*, 17 August 1963, McCone clipping file, HIC. In later years, McCone told interviewers that he supported the treaty because he was convinced that by then the United States had technical collection systems that could detect Soviet violations. McCone ~~NY~~ OH, 19; McCone ~~NY~~ OH, 29; McCone/McAuliffe OH, 31.

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DCI muster support in Congress and brief Gen. Eisenhower and presidential aspirant Nelson Rockefeller, the governor of New York, on the treaty after it was signed. McCone pointed out to the former president that, except for the provision banning nuclear testing in outer space, the proposed treaty was the same as the one his administration had proposed in 1959 and 1960. The general replied that Soviet advancements in ABMs had altered the situation since then, but he said he would endorse the treaty if McCone and the JCS, independently and without direction from the White House, also supported it. Rockefeller was uncommitted, and the Kennedy administration worried that he appeared to be receiving briefings from the treaty's detractors. McCone, along with Rusk and Harriman, also briefed the JCS. Their final position paralleled the DCI's.⁵⁴ ~~XX~~

After members of the Senate Foreign Relations, Atomic Energy, and Armed Services Committees held hearings on the treaty, including testimony from McCone—who stressed the four safeguards described above—the Foreign Relations Committee approved the treaty on 29 August by a 16–1 vote, and the full Senate ratified it on 24 September, 80–19. The treaty went into effect on 10 October, when the instruments of ratification were exchanged at ceremonies in Washington, London, and Moscow.⁵⁵ (U)

Distrust and Verify (U)

For the rest of his directorship, McCone's and the community's involvement with the test ban issue focused on monitoring Soviet compliance with the treaty. During the treaty's first year, McCone continued to voice concerns about the intelligence aspects of monitoring. He warned that the United States must not lock itself into a limited inspection regime when new intelligence sources might indicate that previously unknown or unsuspected test loca-

tions needed to be inspected. ~~XX~~

Complicating the question of US intelligence capabilities was the need to protect sources and methods—one of the DCI's statutory responsibilities. Occasions might arise when Congress, the American public, and US allies would not be convinced that the Soviets were or were not complying with the treaty unless the US government publicized information

⁵³ McCone untitled memorandum on the test ban treaty, 30 July 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 864–65; ~~XX~~

⁵⁴ "Memorandum of Conference with President Kennedy," 22 July 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 831; McCone calendars, entries for 24 and 31 July 1963; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Governor Rockefeller...31 July 1963," McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 179; "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 865–66; "Statement of Position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Three-Environment Nuclear Test Ban Treaty," 12 August 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII/VIII/IX, Arms Control; National Security Policy; Foreign Economic Policy: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 218. ~~XX~~

⁵⁵ Giglio, 218; Parmet, 311–16; Firestone, 87–89, 110–13, 123ff.; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 909–13; Philip J. Briggs, "Kennedy and the Congress: The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, 1963," in *John F. Kennedy: The Promise Revisited*, 38–50; Seaborg, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban*, chap. 20; Mandelbaum, 180–81; "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1961–1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 886. (U)

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that might compromise agents or technical systems. Preventing such revelations was one of the main reasons McCone insisted that the United States not rely on intelligence as a substitute for comprehensive on-site inspections to verify Soviet compliance. In comments at meetings of the Committee of Principals during 1964, he addressed details of conducting those inspections—including the wording of phrases pertaining to them in subsequent protocols. He wanted to avoid giving the Soviets more chances to violate the spirit of the treaty by taking advantage of ambiguous language in its letter.

X

President Kennedy put McCone on a committee that reviewed proposed American tests to ensure they conformed to the provisions of the treaty. He continued in that function after Lyndon Johnson became president. The other members were Rusk, McNamara, Seaborg, Foster, Maxwell Taylor, and Jerome Weisner, the White House science adviser. This responsibility drew on McCone's nuclear expertise and was not directly related to his role as DCI. For instance, in February 1964 he argued against conducting an underground excavation test under the PLOWSHARE program because it might release radioactive debris in detectable quantities. By his reading, the treaty permitted only fully contained tests. McCone's interpretation of the agreement was questionable, but President Johnson decided for political and diplomatic reasons to suspend the proposed explosion. As Bundy advised the president, "You don't want the Russians accusing you of breaking a treaty [in an election year]." The AEC did not conduct the test until December.⁵⁸ (U)

A leadership change in Moscow in October 1964 disrupted activity on arms control for a while. Until the political situation in the Kremlin stabilized, McCone cautioned

ACDA Director Foster, the United States should not raise the issue of nuclear disarmament. He believed the Soviet policy elite was so preoccupied with internal politics and relations with the Eastern European satellites that it could not discuss the issue meaningfully. On one occasion during this period, McCone uncharacteristically spoke theoretically about how disarmament would have a long-term beneficial effect on the Soviets. In comments reminiscent of Eisenhower's censure of the "military industrial complex," the DCI opined that if Soviet industry was redirected to make consumer products instead of "the sterile goods of war," the Soviet people "would be more affluent, they would have more tact, they would move away from their sterile society and into a different type of society." He thought Washington and Moscow might even consider exchanging intelligence on each other's capabilities as one of several steps toward ending the arms race. For the DCI, the problem was getting the superpowers to agree on the essential first step—a verification system that really worked.⁵⁹ X

The largest Soviet underground test yet, on 15 January 1965, fortified McCone's suspicions about Moscow's willingness to observe the treaty's limits. Just a few days after the DCI told a congressional committee that through all of 1964 the Soviets apparently had not violated or taken advantage of loopholes in the treaty,

At a later meeting of the Committee of Principals, McCone "was particularly strong in his feeling that this was...a test ban violation," according to Seaborg, and evidently wanted the US government to say so explicitly in a press release. Instead, the administration took a more subdued approach, merely announcing that the detonation had occurred while quietly asking the Soviets for an explanation. When news of the test appeared before the official announcement, an irate President Johnson chastised McCone, Ball and McNamara for the unauthorized disclosure, which he feared might derail further arms control efforts. Johnson, wrote Seaborg, was "direct and vociferous

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⁵⁸ NSAM No. 269, "Procedure for Approval of Certain Nuclear Tests," 31 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, VII, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 898-99; Abram Chayes (Department of State legal adviser) memorandum to U. Alexis Johnson, "White House Meeting Today Concerning Project Sully," 7 February 1964, NSAM No. 282, "Project Sully," 11 February 1964, and "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1964-1968, XI, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 13-15, 153-54. (U)

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in his complaints" to them "as the leaks had involved their departments" and "must be stopped." The administration concluded a few weeks later that the explosion was part of a PLOWSHARE experiment [redacted]

[redacted] McCone's initial reaction to the test was hasty and overdrawn, bespeaking his unmitigated distrust of Soviet intentions.⁶⁰ ~~X~~

"No other accomplishment in the White House gave Kennedy greater satisfaction," presidential speechwriter Theodore Sorensen wrote soon after the test ban treaty was ratified. Averell Harriman concluded years later, however, that it had been a hollow achievement. "When you stop to think of what the advantages were to us of stopping all testing in the early 1960s when we were still ahead of the Soviets[,] it's really appalling to realize what a missed opportunity we had." Yet while McCone was AEC chairman and DCI during the years the test ban was being discussed, he never advocated using a treaty to freeze the US nuclear advantage. One foreseeable consequence of the US government not having done so soon became a reality. The treaty forced testing underground, allowing the Soviets to develop, produce, and deploy even deadlier weapons. As noted earlier, they quickly seized the opportunity. The treaty also would have scant impact on the problem of proliferation, in the judgment of the Intelligence Community. "[I]f India, Israel, Sweden or other technically competent nations show as much determination to develop such weapons as have France and China, the types of pressure which the USSR and the US have been willing to use to date against potential proliferators would probably not be successful," an October 1964 NIE stated. Meanwhile, the Johnson administration continued sending proposals for a comprehensive test ban treaty to negotiators in Geneva. The effort would not bear fruit until 1968, when the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons.⁶¹ ~~X~~

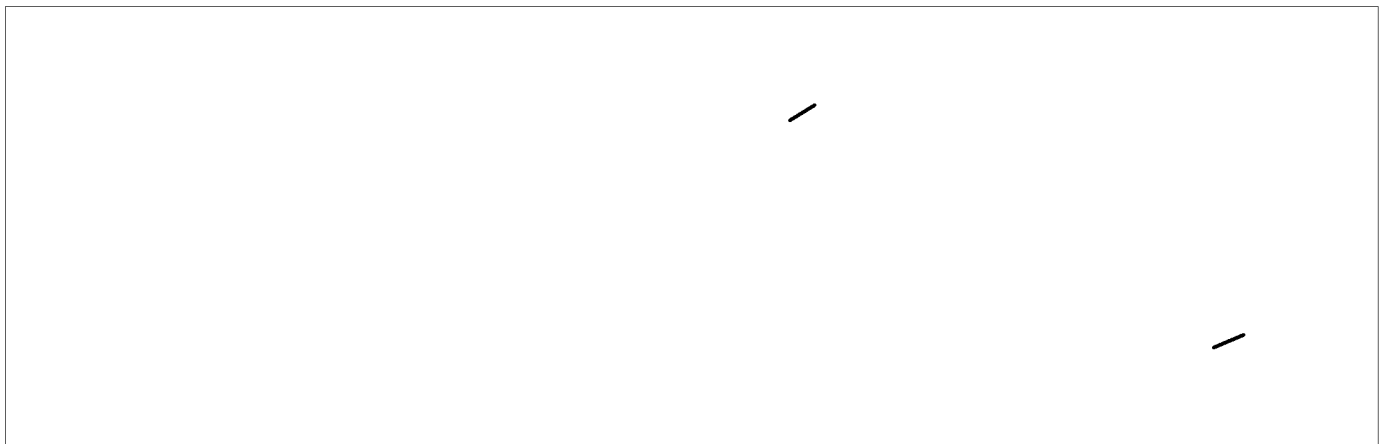
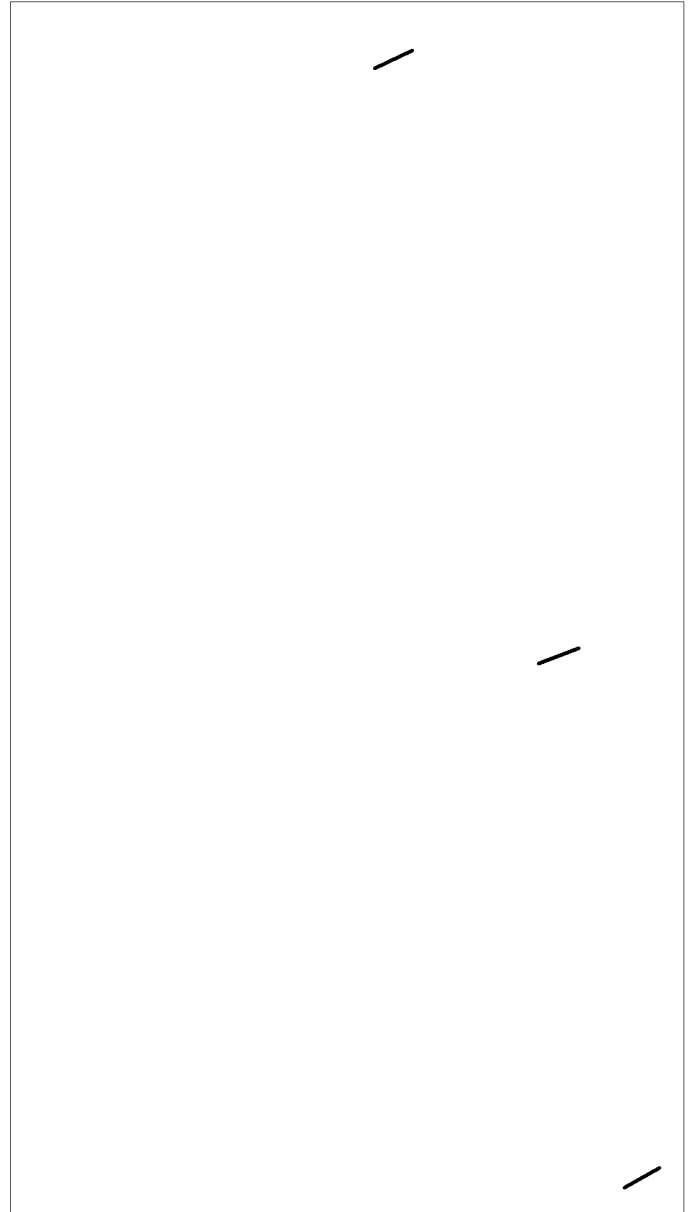
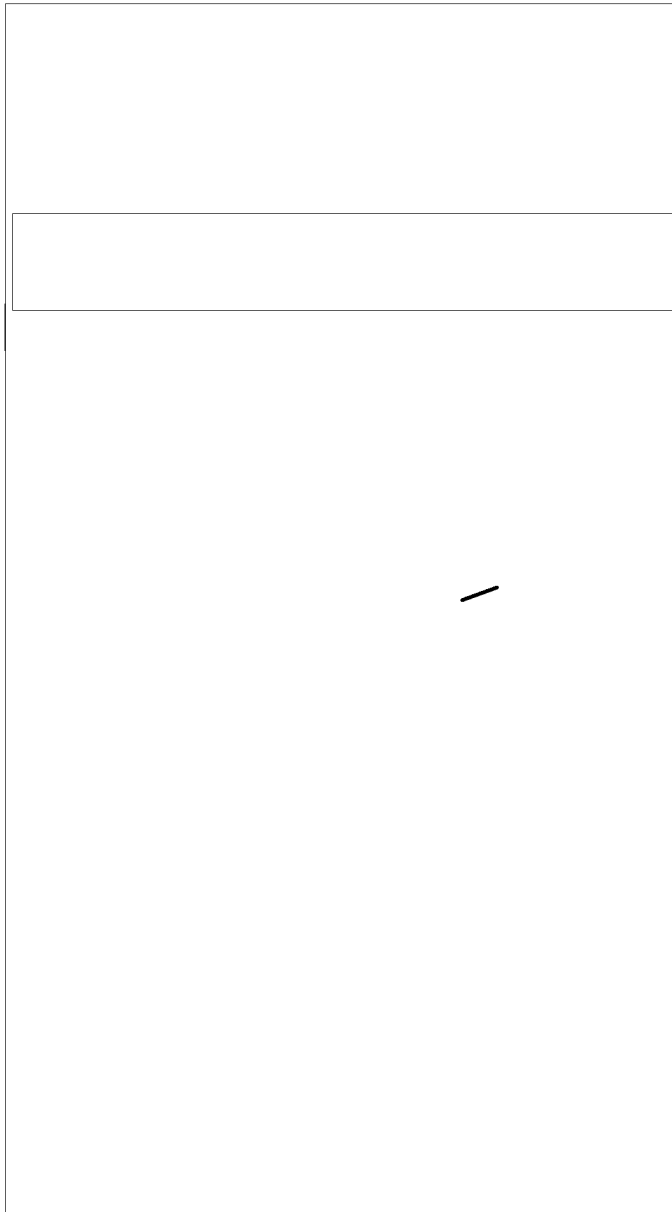
Taunting the Bear: Anti-Soviet Covert Actions (U)

During McCone's tenure, CIA's covert action operations against the Soviet Union were redirected outward, just as its espionage activities were, and for the same reasons. [redacted]

⁶⁰ Transcript of McCone testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 60, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 19; Kirkpatrick memorandum about DCI meeting with PFIAB on 4 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 382; Seaborg, "Notes of Meetings," 19 January 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XI, *Arms Control and Disarmament*, 170-71; Glenn T. Seaborg with Benjamin S. Loeb, *Stemming the Tide*, 221-25. ~~X~~

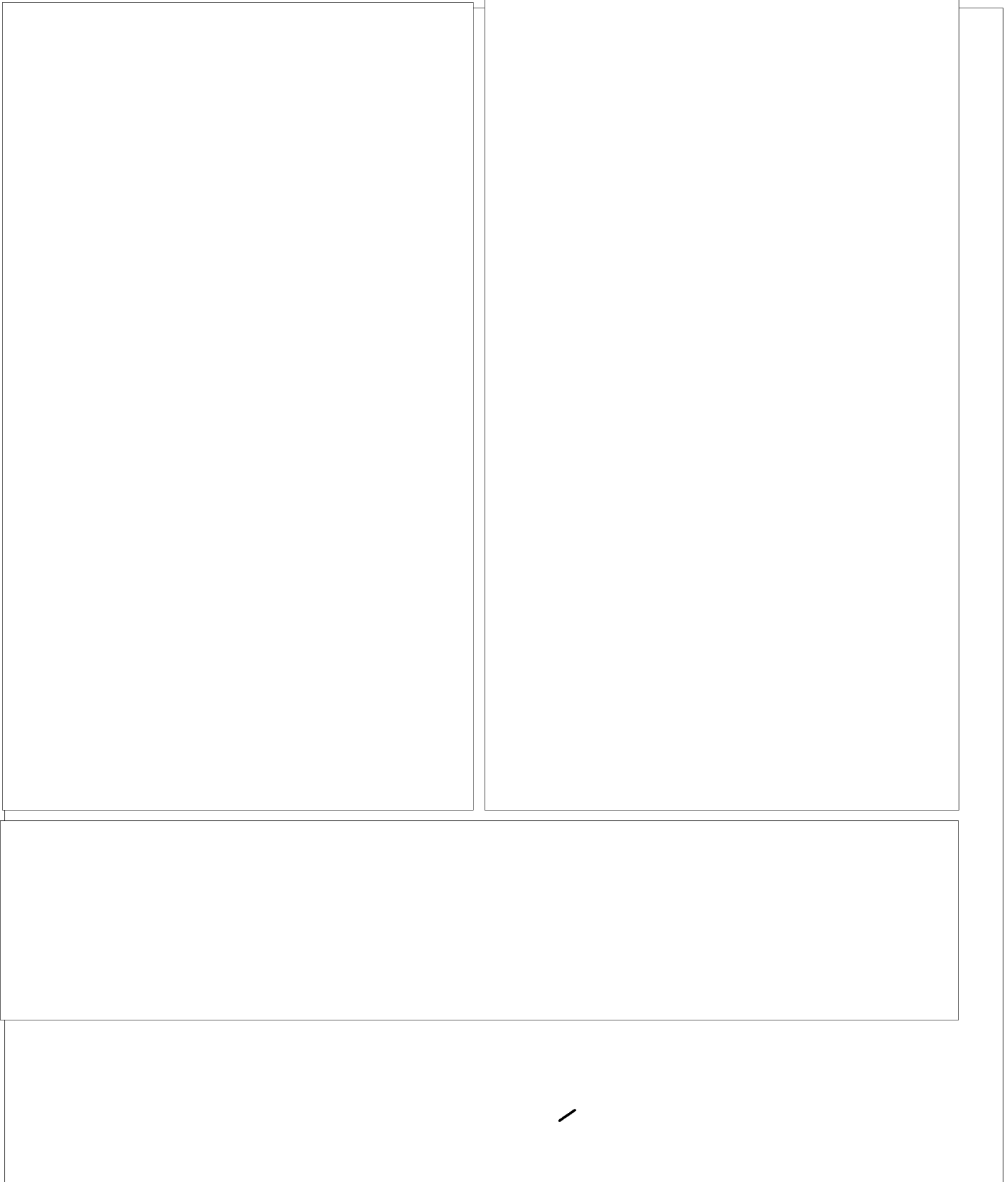
⁶¹ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 836; Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War*, 185; NIE 4-2-64, "Prospects for a Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Over the Next Decade," 21 October 1964, 2; Seaborg, *Stemming the Tide*, chaps. 18-23. ~~X~~

[redacted] *Semi-Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 1 October 1962-31 March 1963*, 34. ~~X~~



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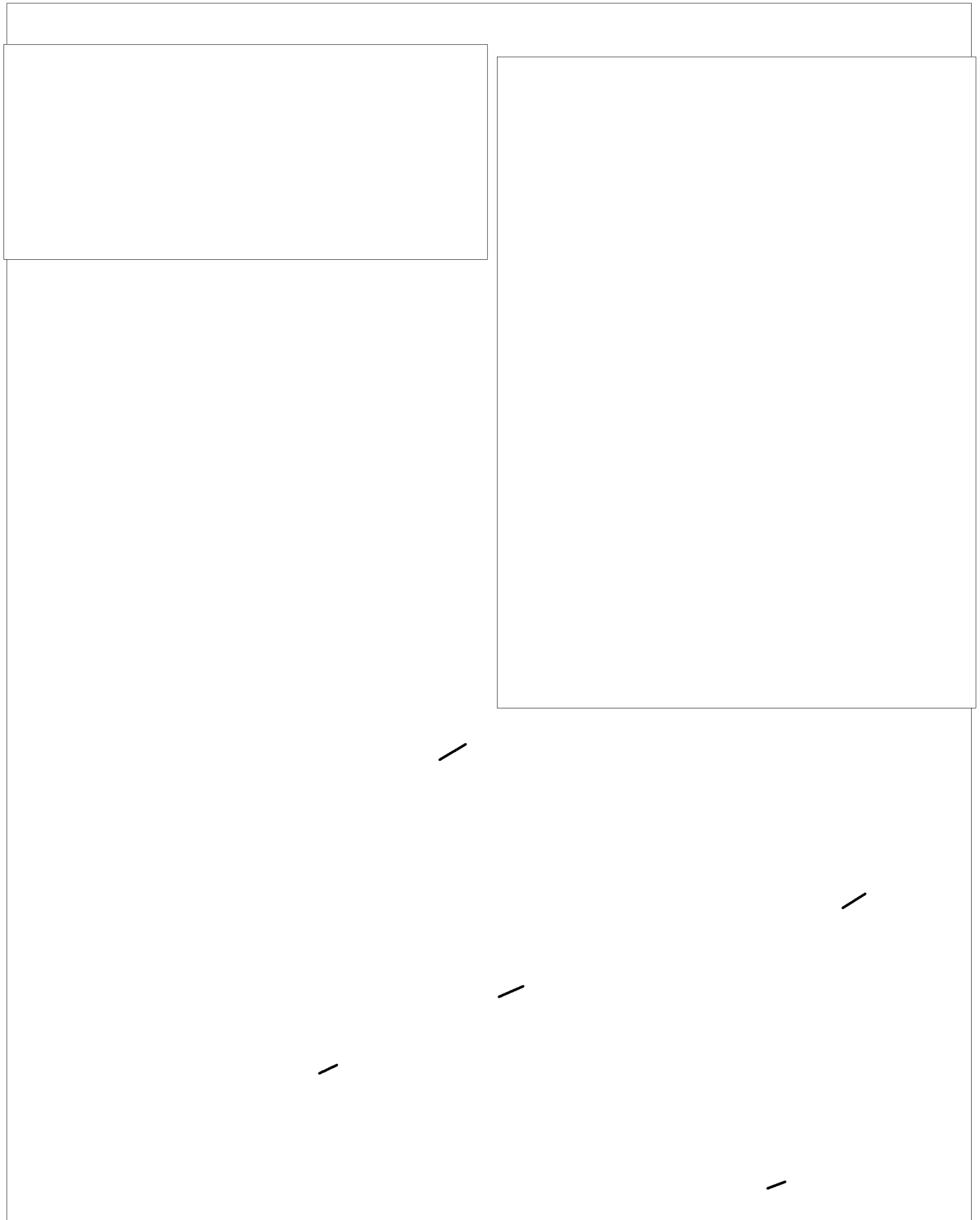
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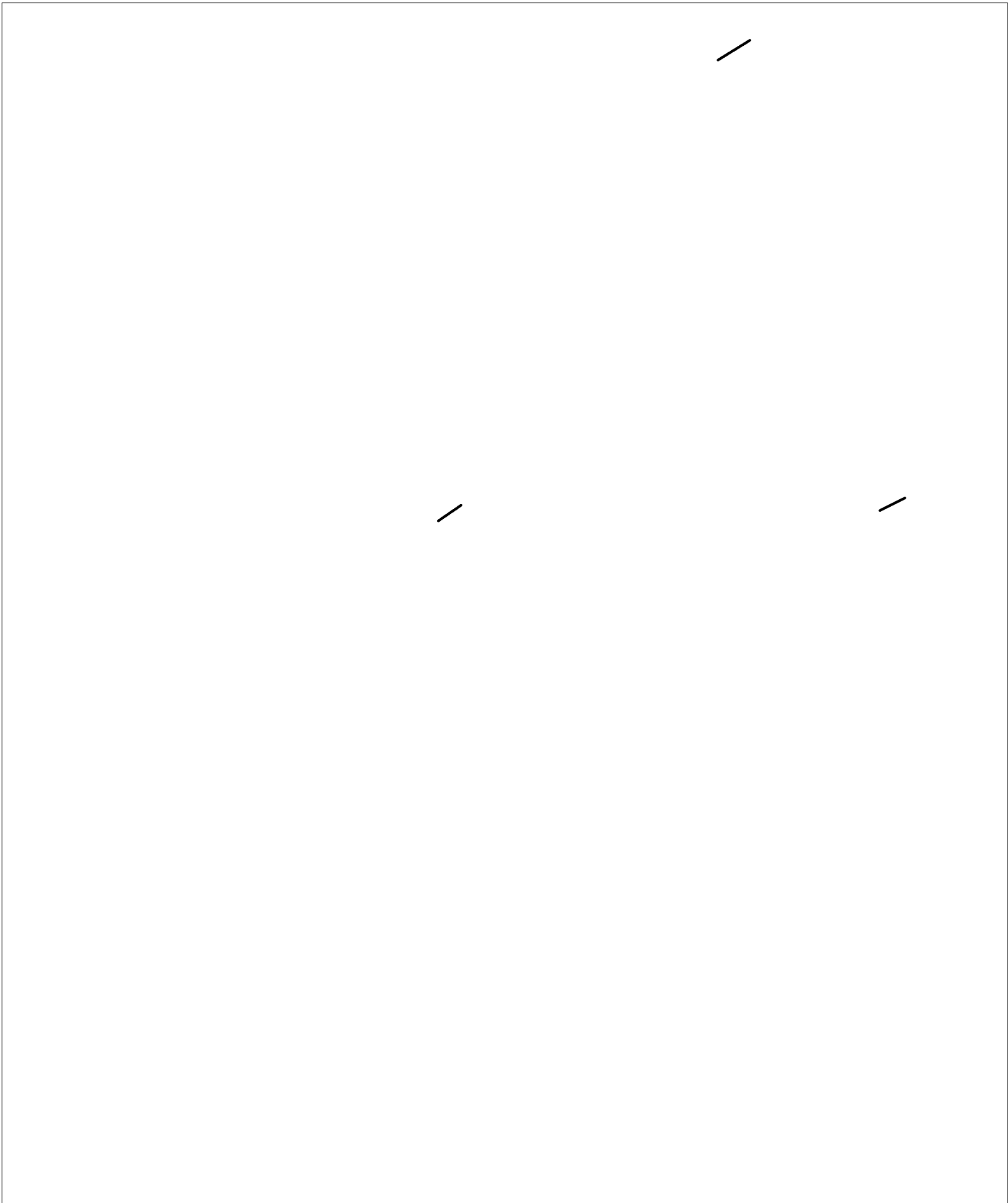
Confronting the Main Adversaries (I): The Soviet Union (U)



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The split between the Soviet Union and the PRC was one of the salient factors in US policy toward those countries during the early 1960s.⁷⁴ Moscow and Beijing's mutual hostility had multiple causes rooted in history, ideology, and national interest. These sources included the two countries' longstanding rivalry over territory in central Asia, their contest for leadership of the international communist movement, ideological differences over the nature of Marxism, personal antagonism between Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, and the resentment of Chinese rulers over what they regarded as inadequate Soviet aid, always begrudgingly given, and the Soviets' tepid support of the PRC in its dispute with the Republic of China on Taiwan. By 1963, after Moscow declined to help Beijing in its border dispute with India in 1962 and compromised with Washington over the missiles in Cuba, the estrangement was public and complete. The two regimes had become, in Ambassador Charles Bohlen's paradigm, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks of the communist world.⁷⁵ While McCone was DCI, assessments by CIA and the Intelligence Community that the split was wide and enduring contributed to the Kennedy administration's decision to exploit it—to drive the communist powers further apart by effecting a détente of sorts with the Soviet Union while isolating the PRC internationally as a dangerous revolutionary force. CIA—withstanding McCone's uncertainties about the severity of the split—helped execute the policy through various covert endeavors. (U)

CIA analysts first began describing differences between the Soviet Union and the PRC in 1952. During the rest of

the 1950s, the Agency's judgments about the split, although not uniform, went further than the rest of the community in concluding that Sino-Soviet solidarity was eroding—especially after Stalin's death in 1953.⁷⁶ Coordinated community assessments were more guarded. An NIE in 1954 set the general tone for the next several years:

Communist China is more an ally than a satellite of the USSR. It possesses some capability for independent action... We believe that despite potential sources of friction between the two powers arising from occasional conflicts of national interests, the cohesive forces in the relationship will be far greater than the divisive forces throughout the period of this estimate [mid-1959].

Such judgments paralleled those of most policymakers downtown, who until around 1960 thought conclusions about a schism were, in former CIA analyst Harold Ford's words, "based heavily on tea-leaf interpretations of what Soviet and Chinese media were saying." Bilateral disputes were over tactics, not strategy, and would come and go as situations changed; animosity was highly personalized between Khrushchev and Mao, and thus transient; and fundamental agreement on the basic point continued—the West, and especially the United States, was the prime enemy who would be vanquished through socialist revolution.⁷⁷ (U)

Events in 1960 and 1961—the Kremlin's sudden withdrawal of advisers from the PRC, and Khrushchev's denunciation of Mao and his foreign proxies—provided the definitive proof of grave discord that had been missing. As Sir Percy Cradock, a senior member of the US-UK Joint Intelligence Committee, has aptly written, "All this marked a new stage of the struggle: secret family quarrels, with indi-

⁷⁴ General information in this section comes from: Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies*, chap. 7; Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: U.S. Relations with China since 1949*, 115–34; Harold P. Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split," *Studies* 41, no. 4 (1997): 41–55; idem, "The Eruption of Sino-Soviet Politico-Military Problems, 1957–60," in Raymond L. Garthoff, ed., *Sino-Soviet Military Relations*, 100–113; Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, 340ff; Peter Jones and Sian Kevill, comps., *China and the Soviet Union, 1949–84*, chaps. 3–5; Noam Kochavi, "Washington's View of the Sino-Soviet Split, 1961–1963: From Puzzled Prudence to Bold Experimentation," *ICJNS* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 50–79; Alfred D. Low, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, chaps. 1–7; Constantine Pleshakov, "Nikita Khrushchev and Sino-Soviet Relations," and Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945–1963*, 226–94; and Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961*. The Pinyin transliteration system for Chinese names has been used except in direct quotations or titles of documents. (U)

⁷⁵ James C. Thomson (Department of State) memorandum to Harriman, "Secretary's Policy Planning Meeting, January 2, 1962; Discussion of the Sino-Soviet Conflict and US Policy," 12 January 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXII, Northeast Asia*, 177. (U)

⁷⁶ Much of CIA's early analysis on this subject was produced under the aegis of the Sino-Soviet Studies Group in a special set of papers called the "Esau Studies"—an allusion to the feuding brothers Jacob and Esau in the Book of Genesis. ONE, ONI, the Senior Research Staff on International Communism, and FBIS also prepared many assessments of aspects of Sino-Soviet relations during the 1950s and early 1960s. (U)

⁷⁷ NIE 11-4-54, "Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action Through Mid-1959," 15 September 1954, *CIA's Analysis of the Soviet Union, 1947–1991*, 46; Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split," 42. (U)

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rect abuse and the occasional sound of muffled blows, were succeeded by open disagreement and public polemics. The West now had something to bite on...."

When this assortment of open source and secret information was collated and examined, a new analytic line rose to dominance in the community during McCone's years as DCI: the competing interests of the communist powers overrode their ideological affinities and made their differences irreconcilable. "There is still one Communist faith," stated an estimate in August 1960, "but there are now two voices of Communist authority.... The Sino-Soviet relationship is not a Communist monolith." ONE chief Sherman Kent wrote McCone in late 1961 that

the Sino-Soviet conflict is at bottom a clash of national interests. While each professes devotion to Communist unity, each seeks to mobilize the entire world Communist movement in the service of its own aims.... Barring a radical change in Chinese outlook or leadership, we now believe that the chances of a full break in party relations between the two during the next year or so have increased very substantially.

"Sino-Soviet relations are in a critical phase just short of an acknowledged and definitive split," an NIE in early 1962 concluded. "There is no longer much chance of a fundamental resolution of differences." A year later, an NIE forecast that "the Chinese will almost certainly continue...to expand their influence at Soviet expense.... A formal schism could occur at any time." In 1964, the sense of the community was that Sino-Soviet relations might vacillate somewhat, but "the rift is so deep and the national interest of each party so heavily engaged that there is virtually no

chance of reconciliation under the present leaders. The international movement may now be on the eve of a formal split." "Soviet leaders appear to have concluded that they will be locked in a severe struggle with China for a protracted period," went another estimate that year, "[and they will] pursue their own interests...despite the cost of...consequent fracturing of the international movement."⁷⁹ (U)

Assessments such as those ran contrary to the traditional thinking of some senior CIA officers—mainly longtime students of communist theory and Soviet affairs in the DDP and the DI—and, at least for most of the time, of DCI McCone. Like most members of the US national security establishment, McCone had believed for many years that the Soviet Union and the PRC were steadfast allies. To McCone, the early evidence of a split was too sketchy, too inferential, too contrary to continued signs of cooperation. As AEC chairman, McCone told the NSC in 1960 that he "took the schism...with a grain of salt," noting how fervently the Soviets supported China's application for UN membership and representation at meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency.⁸⁰ (U)

As DCI, despite briefings such as the one from Kent quoted above, McCone maintained his skepticism. In 1963, he told the NSC that he did not think the "very great" differences between the communist superpowers were "very deep" or that a "final break" would occur. Inside CIA, McCone urged Agency analysts not to become fixed to their latest judgments and to look at and weigh carefully all evidence of either reconciliation or rupture. "[W]e must study the indicators with great care and great objectivity and not be influenced by a preconceived conclusion in this matter." Current assessments about a schism—for example, the DI's statement in July 1963 that "[w]e can...expect an accelerated emergence of two competing and hostile Communist world centers, with accompanying disruption of world Communism"—must not become the new conventional wisdom. With the nation's vital interests at stake in several

⁷⁸ Percy Craddock, *Know Your Enemy*, 167–68; Helms memorandum to Carter, "Inquiry from Senator Russell Relative to Sino-Soviet Dispute," 31 July 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 3, folder 9. ~~SECRET~~

⁷⁹ Ford, "Calling the Sino-Soviet Split," 42–50; Kochavi, "Washington's View of the Sino-Soviet Split," 54–57; NIE 100-3-60, "Sino-Soviet Relations," 9 August 1960, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, XIX, *China*, 1959–1960, 704; Kent memorandum to McCone, "An Appraisal of Soviet Intentions," 21 December 1961, *CIA: Analysis of the Soviet Union*, 1947–1991, 72, 74; NIE 11-5-62, "Political Developments in the USSR and the Communist World," 21 February 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, V, *Soviet Union*, 375; NIE 13-63, "Problems and Prospects in Communist China," 1 May 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXII, *Northeast Asia*, 366; NIE 10-2-64, "Prospects for the International Communist Movement," 10 June 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXX, *China*, 62; *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XIV, *Soviet Union*, 24. The change in community analysis occurred quickly once it began. Only three months before NIE 11-5-62 was published, a special estimate concluded that a rupture in relations would be counterproductive for both communist powers, and therefore was unlikely. SNIE 13-3-61, "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions in the Far East," 30 November 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, XXII, *Northeast Asia*, 173–74. The assessments of the ~~SECRET~~ JIC underwent a similar evolution. Craddock, *Know Your Enemy*, 225–33. (U)

⁸⁰ Editorial note about 464th NSC meeting on 20 October 1960, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, XIX, *China*, 730. (U)

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areas affected by a split between the communist powers—arms control, regional controversies, possible US-Soviet conflict in Berlin and elsewhere—“hard facts and positive information” were needed more than ever.⁸¹ ~~(S)~~

McCone saw some convincing reasons why both Moscow and Beijing would set aside their differences—not the least of which was the struggle against their shared American enemy—and he questioned whether Khrushchev was acting as if a split really had occurred. In the premier's discussions with Harriman in Moscow during the test ban negotiations in July 1963, for example, McCone thought Khrushchev was telling the United States that the communist powers' dispute could be straightened out. The DCI noted that Khrushchev said he would still assist China and had not mentioned abrogating their mutual defense treaty. “Frankly,” McCone told his senior analysts,

I have been alarmed over what he said to Harriman, and I fail to give the very great optimistic, hopeful turn to the events of the last two weeks which are being carried around by some in Washington. Except for Mao's statement which seemed to draw the color line, yellow and black versus white, we don't seem to have very much to pin our hopes on, except for a lot of polemics.⁸² ~~(S)~~

One bit of controversial information that McCone and most Agency analysts considered but dismissed was the assertion of KGB defector Anatoliy Golitsyn that the Sino-Soviet split was part of a massive disinformation plot—a “strategic deception”—orchestrated in Moscow. After counterintelligence chief James Angleton told PFIAB in 1962 about Golitsyn's idea, CIA officers had assured the board that there was no evidence for the defector's idiosyncratic

assessment. Nonetheless, upon hearing from Golitsyn personally, McCone ordered a panel of Agency specialists on the Soviet Union and China to study the question again. His action did not indicate that he accepted the defector's theory. Rather, he seems to have regarded Golitsyn's interpretation as additional intelligence that Agency estimators should factor into their judgment on the nature and extent of the rift. The panel of experts—dubbed the “Flat Earth Committee” by detractors of Golitsyn's “handler,” Angleton—concluded, in line with previous CIA assessments, that the defector's theory was unsupportable, and thereafter McCone did nothing else to lend credence to it. (The Golitsyn case and McCone's relations with Angleton are discussed in Chapter 13.)⁸³ ~~(S)~~

At least in analytical terms, McCone maintained a “prove it” attitude about the split throughout his directorship. In 1964, he told the NSC about new clandestine information that indicated the Sino-Soviet schism was deeper than the countries' public statements suggested. He further noted that the Soviets had deployed more troops along the Chinese border, and that allies of Beijing, such as North Korea, were castigating Moscow for “deviationism.” In early 1965, however, he told a congressional oversight committee that Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 eliminated a major irritant between the two countries. Moreover, he testified, “[C]ertain defense treaties [between Moscow and Beijing] are still in existence...they have not abrogated those, and...until some such move as that takes place[,] it is a little hard to take the position that the rupture is irreparable.”⁸⁴ ~~(S)~~

McCone's reservations about Sino-Soviet tensions did not lead him to order the reconsideration of community or Agency assessments, as he had in one instance with Vietnam, nor to temper CIA's covert activities to exploit the dif-

⁸¹ Bromley Smith, “Summary Record of the 516th Meeting of the National Security Council,” 31 July 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–63, XXII, *Northeast Asia*, 373; CIA memorandum, “Implications of the Sino-Soviet Rupture for the US,” OCI No. 1585/63, 18 July 1963, MORI doc. no. 262441; McCone untitled memorandum to Kirkpatrick, 25 February 1963, *ERLIS*, 1961–1963, V, *Soviet Union*, 634.

⁸² McCone memorandum to Cline and Kent, “This afternoon's briefing of the NSC,” 31 July 1963, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; “DCI Morning Meeting Minutes, October 17, 1964,” ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 348. As it turned out, the PRC regarded the test ban treaty as a grievous sellout that threatened to cripple its own nuclear program. ~~(S)~~

⁸³ [Bronson Tweedy (former DDP officer)], “Anatoliy Mikhailovich Golitsyn—Review,” CI Staff Study No. 5, CI 211-70 (March 1970), 30; [] interview by [] 2 June 1984, 24; Kirkpatrick memorandum to Helms and Cline, “Group to Consider the Implications and Possible Courses of Action in Connection with the Developing Situation Between Moscow and Peking,” Action Memorandum No. A-266, 8 July 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 2, folder 8; Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior*, 85–86, 89–91; David Wise, *Molehunt*, 114; Carter untitled memorandum to Golitsyn, 28 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 1. ~~(S)~~

⁸⁴ “Summary Record of National Security Council Meeting No. 525, April 2, 1964,” National Security Files, NSC Meetings 1964, LBJ Library; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Rusk, September 12th[1964],” McCone Papers, box 6, folder 13; “Soviet, Peking Worlds Apart, McCone Says,” Washington *Evening Star*, 15 November 1964, McCone clipping file, HIC; transcript of McCone testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 48, 88, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 19. ~~(S)~~

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ferences between the communist powers. The Agency's operational initiatives supported an overall administration policy designed to fall somewhere between, in Dean Rusk's words, "tinkering...as though we were playing with toys" and "retreat[ing] behind the business that 'well, we ought not to [try to widen the rift] anyhow.'" The Department of State directed all US missions to treat the Sino-Soviet conflict in ways that would highlight the "inconsistency [in] relations" between the two countries, "deny communists [a] monopoly in interpreting their problems," and "counter communist efforts [to] paper over [their] serious differences and therefore maintain [the] fiction of non-existent monolithic unity." The long-range purpose of the administration's efforts was clear from President Kennedy's comment at a press conference in December 1962: "We would be far worse off—the world would be—if the Chinese dominated the Communist movement, because they believe in war as the means of bringing about the Communist world.... [W]e are better off with the Khrushchev view than we are with the Chinese Communist view, quite obviously." US policy, aided by CIA's operations and informed by its analyses, preferred the Soviet Union over the PRC.⁸⁵ (U)

On the analysis side, CIA's response to the communist rift showed the timeliness and responsiveness that characterized the DI's work under the direction of McCone and Cline. The latter was perhaps the most forceful advocate inside the Agency of the view that the Sino-Soviet split was deep and permanent. He effectively managed the DI's production on the issue so that it comprehensively addressed current developments, responded to customer requests, investigated high impact/low probability scenarios, and conducted retrospective reinterpretations of events in the communist world during the past several years. Policy-relevant analyses included anticipating the regional impact of the schism, especially on Japan, and examining the probable response to US actions to promote pluralism in Bloc countries. DI research on foreign communist and leftist parties helped the DDP

McCone read or was briefed on the key DI products on the split and often relayed their content to senior policymakers—without editorializing.⁸⁷ ~~XX~~

The Johnson administration started out continuing its predecessor's conciliatory approach to Moscow and isolating Beijing, and using CIA to carry out the clandestine aspects of that "divide and conquer" policy. However, Agency activities became mired in the uncertainties of the war in Vietnam. If the Communist Chinese were the principal backers of North Vietnam, did it make sense for the United States to further antagonize them by accentuating the schism, thus inducing them to step up their aid to Hanoi? If the North Vietnamese were Soviet proxies, would US rapprochement with Moscow drive Beijing to increase its support of the North as a way to irritate the Soviets? If the two communist powers were both helping Hanoi against their common capitalist/imperialist enemy, did that mean that the split remained deep enough to exploit through covert and other means? If the split still existed, would massive American

⁸⁵ Transcript of Rusk news conference, 10 December 1962, quoted in Kochavi, "Washington's View of the Sino-Soviet Split," 68; State Airgram 5667, 22 November 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXII, Northeast Asia*, 350 n. 1; *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, 900. (U)

⁸⁷ Cline memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "DD/I Inventory of Work Bearing on Implications of Sino-Soviet Rift," 5 August 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 21. Among several vehement expressions of Cline's view on the split, see his memorandum, "Sino-Soviet Relations," 14 January 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXII, Northeast Asia*, 340. ~~XX~~

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military action against North Vietnam mend it by uniting the East against the West, or widen it by forcing the Soviets to choose between the tangible benefits of "peaceful coexistence" with the United States and its revolutionary kinship with the Vietnamese communists? As the Johnson administration wrestled with these questions, CIA's covert activities in exploiting Sino-Soviet tension made little headway in McCone's last year. ~~XX~~

Khrushchev's Ouster and Intelligence Failure (U)

Nikita Khrushchev (U)

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev fell from power on 15 October 1964 in what CIA called "a carefully planned and skillfully executed palace coup" prompted by "a long accumulation of grievances and dissatisfaction with his leadership." His replacement by a "collective leadership" from the Politburo caught the US government off guard. The Intelligence Community had

been aware of the problems besetting the Soviet leader and had noted "friction and jockeying" in the Kremlin inner circle. For example, assessments in mid-1963 noted that Khrushchev confronted an array of difficulties—a stagnant agricultural sector, a restless intelligentsia, a collection of restive satellite countries beleaguered by worsening political and economic difficulties, Politburo discontent over his handling of the Cuban missile crisis and relations with Communist China—and that "his predominance [in the Soviet leadership] has diminished somewhat." McCone himself told an official audience around the same time that domestic and foreign concerns were critical enough to restrain Soviet

adventurism. The community, however, had not foreseen the emergence of a coalition of rivals strong enough to bring Khrushchev down. Its last forecast of the premier's durability, in early 1964, concluded that his "internal position is now probably stronger and his freedom of action apparently greater than a year ago."⁸⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone was embarrassed by this collection and analysis lapse on the most important international leadership issue of the time. The DCI himself learned about Khrushchev's removal in a telephone call from Moscow either on the 15th or the 16th. "[W]hat appeared to have happened came as a complete surprise to me and to almost everybody else," he said in a confidential briefing.

Without hard evidence, the analysis could only speculate on the meaning of the Kremlin's "cryptic" announcement and posit "indications" that the ex-premier had not stepped down voluntarily. Subsequent assessments of Khrushchev's departure were full of conditionals and qualifiers ("appears to have," "if these were," "seemed," "best guess") that showed that the US government's Kremlinology was little more than ill-informed conjecture. This relative ignorance of internal Soviet politics showed glaringly in an unenlightening Agency analysis that the new Soviet leaders "would be either less troublesome or more dangerous to the West." In an apparent effort to put the best light on the intelligence failure, McCone publicly claimed a few weeks later that Khrushchev's opponents "did not themselves believe they had the strength to remove him until they had assembled" in Moscow on 14 October and were just as surprised as anyone else when their plot succeeded the next day.⁸⁹ ~~XX~~

⁸⁸ OCI, "Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership" and "Top Soviet Leadership," *Current Intelligence Weekly Review*, 20 April 1962 and 19 April 1963, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, V, *Soviet Union*, 407, 669–70; NIE 11-63, "Main Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," 22 May 1963, *ibid.*, 687–89; McCone comments to Army War College National Strategy Seminar, 11 June 1963, *ibid.*, 704–5; numerous OCI analyses on Soviet leadership issues during 1963–64 in HS Files, Job 00-01588R, box 4; OCI, "The Coup Against Khrushchev," *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 23 October 1964, 1, Office of Russian and European Analysis (OREA) Files, Job 80-00341A, box 8, folder 1; CIA memorandum, "Soviet Policies and Problems on the Eve of the Moscow Negotiations," 3 July 1963, cited in Bird, *The Color of Truth*, 249; NIE 11-63, "Main Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," 22 May 1963, 5–7; NIE 11-9-64, "Soviet Foreign Policy," 19 February 1964, DI memorandum, "The Coming Struggle for Power in the USSR," 19 March 1964, and OCI Memorandum, "Khrushchev at 70: An Appraisal of His Leadership Style," 17 April 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XIV, *Soviet Union*, 25, 43–44, 59–64. ~~XX~~

⁸⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with General Eisenhower...", 30 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13; McCone, ~~XX~~ OH, 21; OCI Memorandum, "Soviet Leadership Developments," *Current Intelligence Digest*, 16 October 1964, 1, OREA Files, Job 80-00341A, box 8, folder 1; OCI Memorandum, "Implications of Khrushchev's Downfall," 17 October 1964, and DI Memorandum No. 2051/64, "Khrushchev's Fall and Its Consequences," 22 October 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XIV, *Soviet Union*, 137ff., 148ff.; Richard Corrigan, "McCone Calls Nikita's Fall Big Surprise," *Washington Post*, 15 November 1964, McCone clipping file, HIC. ~~XX~~

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CHAPTER 10

Khrushchev probably fell from power, McCone explained to the NSC two days after the fact, because of his erratic behavior and inconsistent public statements, his flawed leadership that contributed to the Sino-Soviet split and tensions with the Warsaw Pact countries, and his advocacy of reallocating resources toward consumers and away from heavy industry and the military. The DCI had to concede that CIA analysts knew little about the relationship between the two Soviets now running the Kremlin, Alexei Kosygin and Leonid Brezhnev, but he doubted that their power-sharing arrangement would last long and predicted that one of them, or possibly a third figure, would emerge as both premier and first party secretary—as Khrushchev had after Stalin died. McCone anticipated no sharp shifts in Soviet foreign policy in the near term and later told a Senate oversight committee that the leadership change seemed to be having the salutary effect of making Moscow suspend its subversion efforts in the Third World.⁹⁰ ~~✗~~

The sense of the Intelligence Community was the same. In estimates McCone approved during the first part of 1965, the community forecast that Soviet actions abroad would follow the lines of the previous two years. A collective leadership, with its inherent power struggles, was more prone to policy fluctuations, but the new Soviet rulers were unlikely to seek confrontation with the West or, on the other hand, to make significant concessions to it. Risk aversion, not adventurism, would be their watchwords.⁹¹ ~~✗~~

What To Do Next? (U)

The inadequate information and tentative analyses about the Soviet leadership typified American intelligence on the Soviet Union during McCone's tenure. The community was getting better at strategic weapons assessments because of CORONA,

~~_____~~ led to—at times—speculative analysis,

making it harder for the Johnson administration to devise a well-founded Soviet policy. (U)

The administration saw Khrushchev's ouster as an opportunity to move toward détente with the Soviet Union, but McCone did not believe a change was warranted. Speaking almost as a lone voice in the senior policymaking circle, he argued in late 1964 and early 1965 that with Brezhnev, Kosygin, and their comrades preoccupied with internal maneuvering and keeping control over the Bloc countries, new initiatives that might ensnare the United States in unexpected problems or create openings for Soviet ripostes should be avoided. Because the US strategic and political position was so much stronger than the Soviets', the administration ought not to do anything—including back-channel feelers—that would help them inadvertently. McCone's colleagues criticized this view as "Eisenhowerish," however, and it went against the administration's belief that Moscow's predicament might make it more receptive to diplomatic overtures. Washington, according to this line of reasoning, would be shortsighted to let matters drift when so many issues of mutual interest—nuclear weapons, Cuba, China, Third World conflicts—needed attention.⁹² ~~✗~~

In the closing months of McCone's directorship, Vietnam intruded into the superpower relationship, causing serious estrangement. The two sides' actions reinforced one another. The new Soviet leaders reengaged their country in Indochina through diplomatic contacts and affirmations of support to local communists, and the Johnson administration escalated the war through bombing and troop deployments. The Soviet Union's moves did not surprise Washington. Even before the administration's military actions, the Intelligence Community had forecast that Moscow—largely out of reluctance to surrender the field to Beijing—would become more active in the region. The Soviet government, however, was more willing to antagonize the United States (and the PRC) over Vietnam than American analysts had believed.⁹³ (U)

⁹⁰ Cline, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of an Executive Group of the National Security Council, 16 October 1964," and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting in Cabinet Room...16 October 1964," *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIV, Soviet Union*, 124-26; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the National Security Council...17 October 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 10; transcript of McCone testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 91, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 19. Two years earlier, CIA had identified Brezhnev and Kosygin as possible successors to Khrushchev. OCI, "The Khrushchev Succession," *Current Intelligence Weekly Review*, 19 October 1962, *FRUS, 1961-1963, V, Soviet Union*, 538-39. ~~✗~~

⁹¹ David Klein (NSC) memorandum to Bundy, "Discussion on Things Soviet at CIA Last Night," 7 January 1965, and NIE 11-9-65, "Main Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," 27 January 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIV, Soviet Union*, 206-7, 215-16; NIE 11-4-65, "Main Trends in Soviet Military Policy," 14 April 1965, 1-2. ~~✗~~

⁹² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Mr. James Donovan—10 December 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 14; Klein memorandum to Bundy, "Discussion on Things Soviet at CIA Last Night," 7 January 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIV, Soviet Union*, 207-8. ~~✗~~

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By McCone's departure in April 1965, the brief period of "peaceful coexistence" was over. Throughout his dealings with Soviet affairs in the 1950s and 1960s, McCone doubted whether such a condition, by that name or any other, ever could have been established. After all, peaceful coexistence, as its architect Khrushchev had said, "is the form of struggle appropriate to the present epoch."⁹⁴ McCone was consistently realistic about the Soviet Union's long-range intention of winning that struggle against the West. He, CIA, and other members of the community, how-

ever, misjudged the means Moscow would use and the level of determination it would possess—most notably, when they doubted that it would seek nuclear superiority during the next several years. That inaccurate forecast stemmed largely from insufficient intelligence about the "main adversary," which in turn led to erroneous assumptions about Soviet strategic intentions. Despite improvements in human and technical collection while McCone was DCI, that gap in knowledge persisted for years. (U)

⁹³ NIE 11-9-65, "Main Trends in Soviet Foreign Policy," 27 January 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIV, Soviet Union*, 32; OCI report, "The Soviet Union Since Khrushchev," SC No. 00665/65A, 9 April 1965, *ibid.*, 278; SNIE 11-11-65, "Soviet Attitudes Toward the US," 26 May 1965, *ibid.*, 289. (U)

⁹⁴ Department of State, Policy Planning Council, "Soviet Policy in the Light of the Vietnam Crisis," 15 February 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XIV, Soviet Union*, 249. (U)

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Confronting the Main Adversaries (II): The People's Republic of China (U)

President Kennedy continued Eisenhower's "two Chinas" policy for dealing with the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China.¹ The approach treated them as separate states, striking a balance between their interests and containment of the communist regime in Beijing through regional alliances, diplomatic pressure, and military assistance to the Nationalist government on Taiwan. For example, the Kennedy administration refused to support the designs of ROC President Chiang Kai-shek to return to the mainland through military invasion, while at the same time it worked to prevent PRC admission to the United Nations. Despite Chiang's insistence that deteriorating conditions inside China (such as a catastrophic famine in 1961) presented the best opportunity yet for military strikes or large-scale paramilitary operations, Kennedy abided by his statements during the 1960 campaign and would not condone such tactics. (He conveyed his position to the PRC through a back channel in Warsaw.) Nor would he go to war over what he regarded as insignificant pieces of real estate in the Taiwan Strait—the islands of Quemoy, Matsu, and the Pescadores, causes of recurrent tension since the 1950s. (U)

On the ROC's side, the president supported small harassment operations against the mainland, and in the case of UN membership, he went further than his predecessor in siding with the ROC by secretly pledging to use the US veto in the Security Council to prevent the PRC's entry. A good deal of the administration's sufferance of the Nationalists resulted from its fear of the powerful China Lobby and its allies in Congress. More broadly, Washington's hardline policy toward the PRC was but one aspect of the general posture of toughness it struck toward communists worldwide. (U)

Kennedy generally regarded Mao Zedong's China as a greater threat to global peace than the Soviet Union—as an undisciplined revolutionary state committed to spreading its virulent brand of communism to the Third World, and

especially Southeast Asia. Mao, the president declared in August 1963, led a "Stalinist" government that "has called for...international war...to advance the final success of the Communist case." Beijing's actions had produced "a more dangerous situation than any we have faced since the end of the Second World War."² The danger grew more pronounced as Beijing developed nuclear weapons and grew further estranged from Moscow; it might be tempted to assert its influence over the communist world by brandishing its strategic weaponry. Yet, intelligence on the PRC's intentions and capabilities was sketchy, increasing the likelihood that US policymakers, working without sufficient knowledge, might provoke a confrontation with grave international consequences. (U)

The Unclear Intelligence Picture (U)

For John McCone and CIA, this situation called for intensifying collection on military and political targets and devising covert actions to weaken Beijing's hold on the mainland and subvert its stature among developing nations and foreign communist movements. McCone—strongly anticommunist, politically connected to the China Lobby, and personally acquainted with Nationalist leaders—wanted the Kennedy administration to be firm with the PRC. Commenting on a Department of State policy paper in 1962, he wrote: "It seems a little bland...to recommend only the very long term policy of avoiding provocation and hoping things will be better after Mao and his colleagues...die.... This strikes me as simply adopting an attitude of hopefulness rather than facing up to what may be much more pressing short term strategic convulsions in Asia thrust on us by the Chinese Communists."³ Historically, however, US policymakers had perceived that of the two "main adversaries," Communist China posed the lesser threat. Moreover, the PRC, although designated a Priority National Intelligence Objective for several years, in reality had only recently emerged as a target distinct from the Sino-Soviet Bloc. ~~XX~~

¹ See the Appendix on Sources for references to materials on US policy toward the "two Chinas" in the 1960s that were consulted in this work. The Pinyin transliteration system has been used for Chinese names and places except in direct quotations, titles of documents, and references to Nationalist leaders. Similarly, Taiwan and Taiwan Strait are used rather than Formosa and Formosa Strait, names that have fallen into disuse since the 1960s. (U)

² *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1963, 752. (U)

³ McCone letter to Rusk, 25 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 29, folder 23. ~~XX~~

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Consequently, a significantly smaller proportion of CIA's clandestine and analytical resources was dedicated to the Communist Chinese target than to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.



Rally of Mao supporters in the PRC (U)

HUMINT and TECHINT (U)

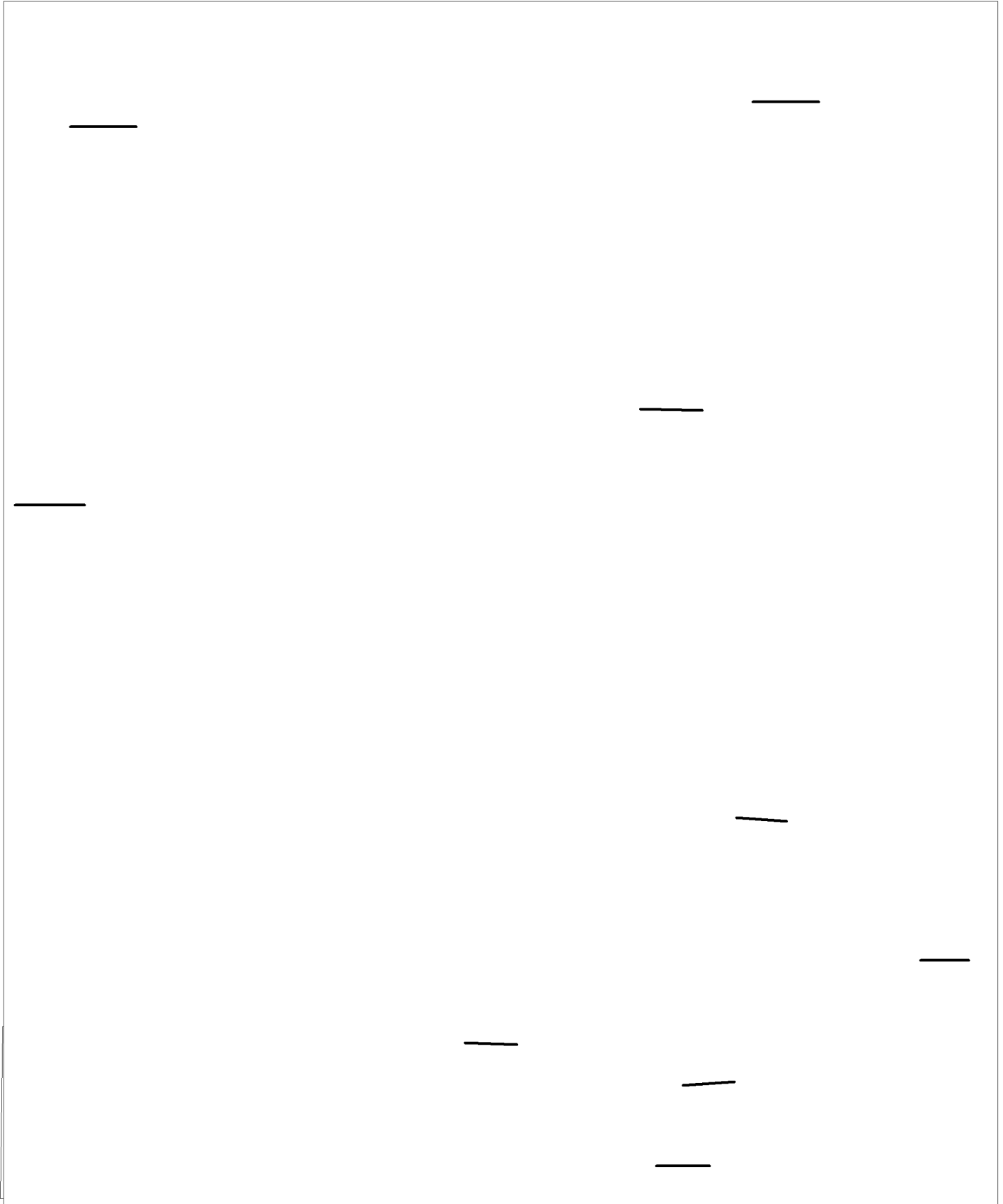
The PRC was an even harder target than the Soviet Union because CIA access to potential intelligence sources was more limited and controlled. The PRC was not admitted to the United Nations until 1971, and the United States did not open a diplomatic mission in Beijing until 1973.

⁴ Lay, vol. 6, 761; Helms memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Fiscal Year 1964 Foreign Intelligence Plans and Programs," 9 May 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 25; *Annual Report for FY 1964*, 31-32 and tables following 4; [redacted] memorandum to Helms, "Five Year Plan—Intelligence Collection and Political Action against China in the Next Five Years...," 9 December 1965, DDO Files, Job 78-03805R, box 1, folder 22; [redacted] "CIA and China in the Time of Mao," unpublished manuscript (1999), 39, copy in HS Files. In 1964, EE Division chief William Colby reorganized [redacted]

⁵ Lay, vol. 6, 746ff; USIB, Critical Collection Problems Committee, material on the PRC, ICS Files, Job 82R00370R, box 2, folder 3. ~~SECRET~~

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Confronting the Main Adversaries (II): The People's Republic of China (U)



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CIA analysis of the PRC during McCone's tenure remained the stepchild it had been in the 1950s. Since the middle of that decade, most assessments of China appeared in the context of Sino-Soviet relations, tensions over Taiwan, and possible renewed hostilities in Korea. The DI paid relatively little attention to internal Chinese affairs. Policy-maker interest in the PRC as a discrete issue subsided further around 1960 after the Soviet Union ended military aid and Mao's "Great Leap Forward" failed.¹³

Personnel allocations in the DI for PRC-related accounts during McCone's tenure are less clear than with the Soviet Bloc because many officers worked in components dealing with the Far East overall or in functional elements whose geographic responsibilities are not readily apparent from available sources or whose staff temporarily shifted assignments to China affairs when needed.

Lacking broad knowledge of political, economic, and military matters in the PRC, CIA and Intelligence Community analysts produced assessments that, although logical and thoughtful, did not advance insights that gave more than episodic help to US policymakers. Early in McCone's tenure, the estimates' conclusions were substantially more moderate than the policies they were meant to inform. In mid-1962, for example, while the administration was raising fears of Chinese belligerence during another tempest in the Taiwan Strait, USIB published a forecast that "over the next few years Communist China will follow relatively conservative and rational policies of the kind recently instituted." Three years later, however, with more intelligence in hand, community analysts reached judgments that were more

hardline: Beijing would move more forthrightly to eject Western influence from Asia and supersede Moscow as leader of the communist world. Chinese foreign policy "in some ways resembles an international guerrilla struggle, which attempts to wear down the enemy's strength by attacking the weak points"—a metaphor that, given what was occurring contemporaneously in South Vietnam, did not inspire confidence that US policy toward the PRC would succeed.¹⁵

Beijing's Nuclear Puzzle (U)

As in previous years, US policymakers during McCone's directorship took the most interest in the PRC when its nuclear weapons program was an issue. The key intelligence question McCone and the community had to answer was: When will the Communist Chinese test their first nuclear device? The PRC's strategic weapons program began in 1955 when Mao—amid a dispute with the United States and the ROC over some offshore islands—authorized a full-scale development effort. Three years later, with major

As early as December 1960, CIA forecast that the PRC probably would detonate its first nuclear device in 1963. In April 1962, analysts concluded that the first test most likely would occur in early 1964.¹⁶

Intelligence and estimates on these subjects found a ready audience downtown. That was especially so by early 1963, when President Kennedy told his national security policymakers that he regarded PRC acquisition of nuclear weap-

¹³ "The Development of Strategic Research at CIA, 1947-1967," 317.

¹⁵ SNIE 13-3-61, "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions in the Far East," 30 November 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XXII, *Northeast Asia*, 172; NIE 13-4-62, "Prospects for Communist China," 2 May 1962, 2; NIE 13-9-65, "Communist China's Foreign Policy," 5 May 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXX, *China*, 169.

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ons as "probably the most serious problem facing the world today." "The President was of a mind," Bundy informed McCone, "that nuclear weapons in the hands of the Chinese Communists would so upset the world political scene it would be intolerable to the United States and the West." The PRC's stature in Asia would rise, as its neighbors looked to it as a model of economic development and as a regional power broker. As discussed in the previous chapter, Kennedy's concern that Mao's revolutionary regime would join the nuclear club was the impetus behind his drive for a test ban treaty throughout the year.¹⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone was determined to prevent an intelligence failure like that of 1949, when the timing of the Soviet Union's first atomic test caught the United States by surprise.¹⁸ His service as chairman of the AEC prepared him for this issue; his familiarity with nuclear technology shows clearly in his writings and statements on the subject as DCI. ~~XX~~

McCone directed his deputies in January 1963 to undertake an all-out, all-source collection effort against the PRC. The Chinese nuclear threat, he noted, was "foremost in the minds of the highest authority and therefore should be treated accordingly by CIA.... There should be no hesitation on the part of CIA to recommend any and all types of clandestine activities directed toward the securing of additional information" about Beijing's nuclear program. ~~XX~~

The new intelligence gave community analysts more assurance that their earlier forecasts were accurate; in July they again predicted that the PRC's first nuclear test most likely would occur in early 1964 at the soonest, but they conceded that it could happen before. ~~XX~~

The conditionality of the SNIE's

¹⁶ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb*, passim; Foot, chap. 7; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 223-24; NIE 13-60, "Communist China," 6 December 1960, 13; NIE 13-2-60, "The Chinese Communist Atomic Energy Program," 13 December 1960, 3-4, 18-23; NIE 13-2-62, "Chinese Communist Advanced Weapons Capabilities," 25 April 1962, 3-4. ~~XX~~

¹⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting between DCI and Mr. Bundy...", 11 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; Chang, chap. 8. ~~XX~~

¹⁸ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting between DCI and Mr. Bundy...", 11 January 1963, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 4; Kirkpatrick memorandum to Helms, Cline, and Scoville, Action Memorandum No. A-161, "All-out Intelligence Effort against Communist China," 11 January 1963, Helms memorandum to McCone, "Ideas on Clandestine Collection Against Communist China," 24 January 1963, Colby memoranda to Helms, "Ideas on Clandestine Collection Against Communist China," 14 February 1963, ~~XX~~ and "Progress in Clandestine Collection Against Communist China," 3 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 10; ~~XX~~ "CIA and China in the Time of Mao," 31-33.

Colby memorandum to Helms, "Progress in Clandestine Collection Against Communist China," and ~~XX~~ "CIA and China in the Time of Mao," 35. ~~XX~~

¹⁹ Colby memorandum to Helms, "Preliminary Study of Nuclear Targets on the China Mainland," 21 June 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 10; ~~XX~~ vol. 6, Append. F, tab 4; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter about requirements on Chinese nuclear weapons, 31 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 5. ~~XX~~

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judgments was well justified. The document incorrectly reported the discovery of a plutonium production reactor and inaccurately predicted that China would not have enough weapons-grade uranium 235 before 1966 (it did so by early 1964).²⁰ ~~XX~~

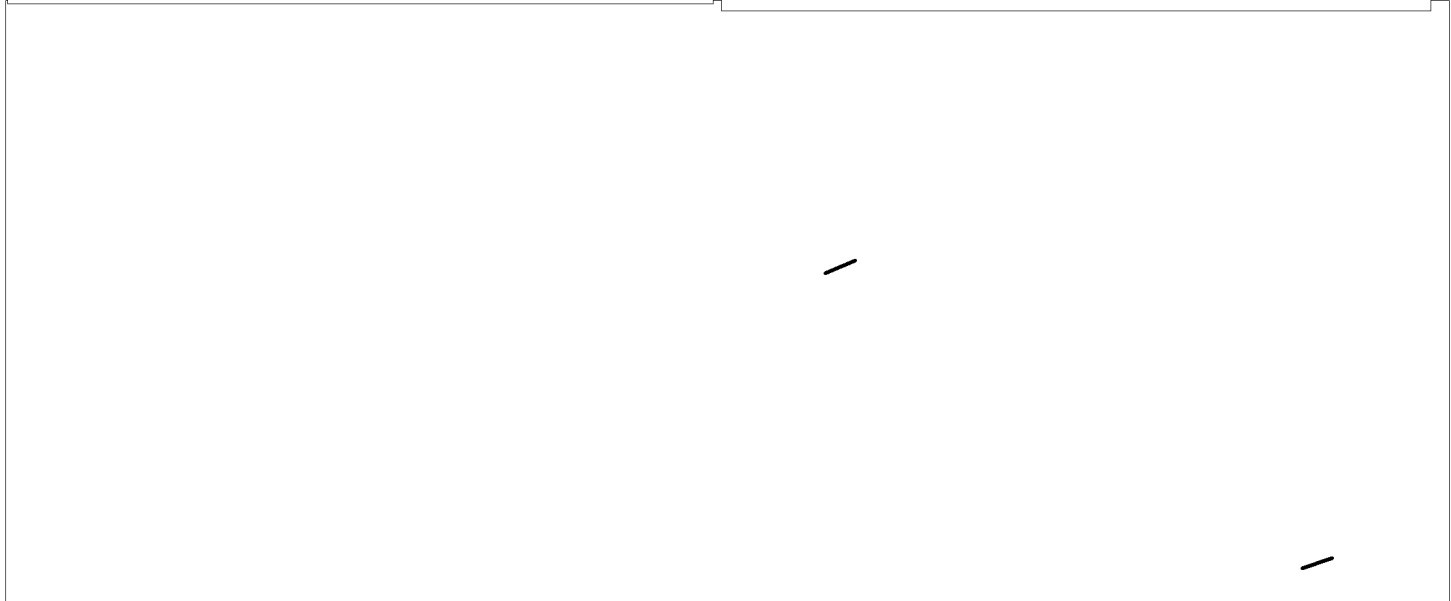
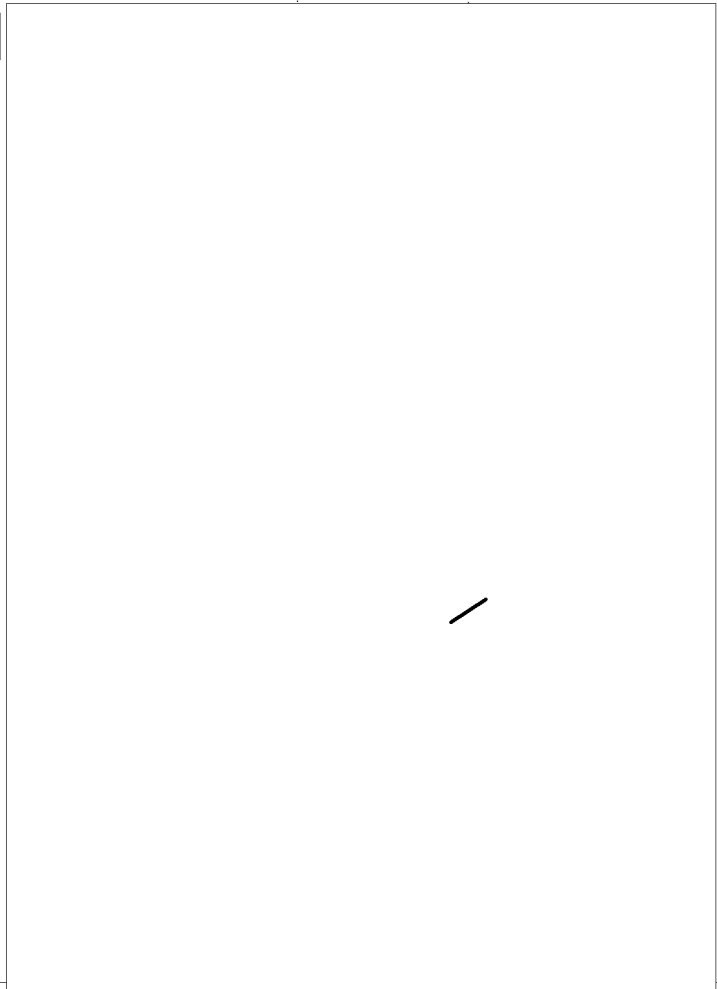
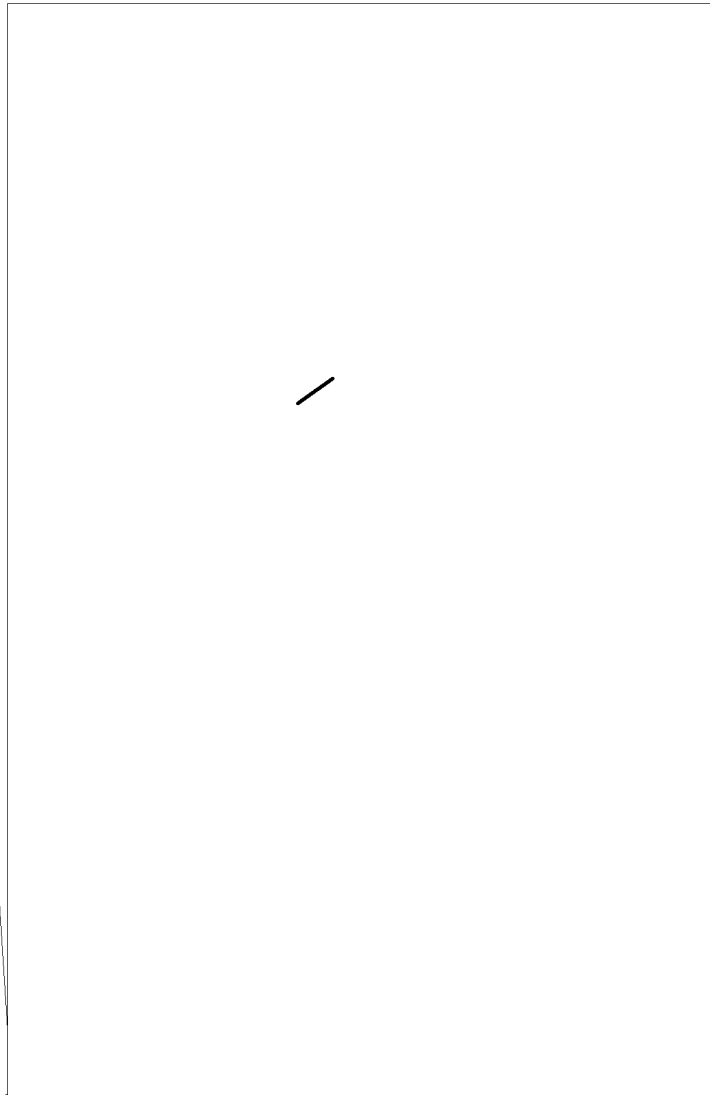
Overt and Covert Reactions (U)

Gripped by uncertainty and fearful of the consequences of Chinese nuclear success, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations considered diplomatic, military, and clandestine steps to impede or halt the PRC's program. Throughout 1961-63, President Kennedy and senior officials proposed to their Soviet counterparts—without success—ideas for joint US-Soviet action against Beijing.

²⁰ SNIE 13-2-63, "Communist China's Advanced Weapons Program," 24 July 1963, 1-2. Some of the flaws in the community estimates during the early 1960s—principally single-outcome forecasting and a failure to gauge Chinese technical skills and determination—are discussed in Willis C. Armstrong et al., "The Hazards of Single-Outcome Forecasting," *Studies* 28, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 57-70, reprinted in H. Bradley Westerfield, ed., *Inside CIA's Private World*, 238-54. ~~XX~~

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~~SECRET~~*Confronting the Main Adversaries (II): The People's Republic of China (U)***The First Test: Forecasts and Follow-Up (U)**

Imagery was the key source. Relying on satellite and aerial photography—the former benefiting from improved camera resolution and larger film supplies on each mission—community analysts by mid-1964 had identified five suspect installations and concluded that two of them, Pao-tou and Lop Nor, were the most likely sites for the first test explosion. Lop Nor attracted special attention after CORONA photography showed construction of a tower that could hold a bomb. In July, McCone told President Johnson that the community could not foretell when the Chinese would detonate a nuclear device but that the presence of those installations in various stages of assembly and operation indicated that PRC scientists had overcome at least some of the problems caused by the Soviet cutoff of technical assistance in 1960. The president suggested that U-2 photography would give more precise information, but McCone and Rusk advised against such a mission on technical and diplomatic grounds.

With intelligence gaps remaining on such a sensitive subject, community analysts were circumspect. A special estimate issued in late August 1964, "The Chances of an Imminent Communist Chinese Nuclear Explosion," noted that while Lop Nor was being readied for a test, a shortage of plutonium suggested that one would not occur until after the end of the year. Some members of the community disagreed with that judgment—the 15th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, 1 October 1964, had been suggested as a possible date—but no representative took a footnote. Two scientists who advised CIA on strategic issues

told McCone that Agency analysts were screwing up by assuming the Chinese device had to use plutonium, not uranium, and thus would take longer to prepare. Perhaps, having heard that opinion, McCone was bolder in his forecasts when he met with Western European heads of government in September, saying the Chinese may conduct a test within 30 to 60 days. At this point, McCone changed his mind about sending a U-2 over Lop Nor, but Rusk and Bundy countered that the consequences of losing a plane were too great to justify the risk.

With a Chinese test drawing nearer, McCone and other officials in the community advised the president that the US government could prevent the PRC from achieving a propaganda victory and avoid being blamed for another intelligence failure by announcing that the administration already knew a test would occur soon. Such a statement would, as one American diplomat said at the time, "reassure neighboring countries that the US was watching and aware." Johnson agreed, and Rusk told the press on 29 September that "for some time it has been known that the Communist Chinese were approaching the point where they might be able to detonate a first nuclear device." This announcement marked the first time that information derived so evidently from satellite imagery had been made public. Meanwhile, CIA

²⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President [and Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy]...5 October [1964]..." McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Burr and Richelson, "A Chinese Puzzle," 46; SNIE 13-4-64, "The Chances of an Imminent Communist Chinese Nuclear Explosion," 26 August 1964, *CORONA: America's First Satellite Program*, 239-44; Michael R. Beschloss, ed., *Reaching for Glory: Lyndon Johnson's Secret White House Tapes, 1964-1965*, 43; Senior Review Panel memorandum to DCI William Casey and DDCI John McMahon, "Study of Intelligence Judgments Preceding Significant Historical Failures," 16 December 1983, ER Files, Job 86B00269R, box 11, folder 72; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Rusk, 12 September 1964," and "Memorandum of Discussion at Luncheon, 15 September [1964]," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13; record of conversation between McCone and UK Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas Home, 21 September 1964, Richard J. Aldrich, ed., *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain, 1945-1970*, 107-8; Bundy untitled memorandum about meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and McCone on 15 September 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXX, China*, 94.

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continued planting stories in Asian media designed to minimize the psychological and political impact of a Chinese test, and the Department of State told US embassies in the region to prepare material for use in overt propaganda and official statements.

At this key juncture, President Johnson and his national security advisers ruled out a preventive military or paramilitary strike.²⁹ The president, who had not evinced the same anxiety over Chinese nuclear weapons as his predecessor, maintained his policy of avoiding confrontation with Beijing. His attitude to the PRC's nuclear threat was that, in his words, "different dangers require different policies and different actions" than toward the Soviet Union. Over the preceding several months a consensus had developed among administration policymakers that Beijing's acquisition of a nuclear capability would not change the status quo in East Asia enough to justify military action. Attacks on mainland strategic sites while the United States and the PRC were not fighting each other would be politically and militarily risky and might cause the Chinese to increase their support to North Vietnam. PRC reprisals against Taiwan also could not be ruled out. In any case, damaged facilities would be rebuilt, leaving the United States with a Hobson's choice of attacking again or acquiescing in embarrassment. (U)

Accordingly, the administration judged that intensifying current policies and programs was the best way to contain

the Communist Chinese threat. Those steps included continuing (but futile) efforts to enlist Moscow in diplomatic moves against Beijing. Some officials still considered military and paramilitary options, including an overt, nonnuclear airstrike by the US or ROC air forces, covert ground attacks using American and Nationalist agents inside China, and sabotage operations by airdropped ROC commandos. The last scenario was deemed the most workable and received "serious analysis" at the time, according to a contemporary document, but did not go forward because it had several prominent flaws beyond the likely diplomatic fallout. Details about target facilities were not known for certain, the Soviet Union probably would not support the action, and the destruction of Chinese stocks of fissile material would be only temporary. With the efficacy of attacks far from assured and with the election less than two months away, President Johnson—running on a "peace platform" against Republican hawk Barry Goldwater—was not about to order military action inside the PRC. McCone agreed that the timing for attacks was wrong just then but said the US government should not categorically rule out a preemptive strike. (U)

CORONA photographs of Lop Nor taken on 8 October removed any doubt that the first Chinese test would occur within days.³⁰ Beijing had grounded all aircraft near the site, removed workers and equipment from the compound, constructed bunkers and instrument platforms, On the 16th, a atomic bomb exploded there. Because the community had followed the prior events so closely and the US government had announced that the test was imminent, its political

²⁸ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President [and Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy]...5 October [1964]...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 1289; Burr and Richelson, "A Chinese Puzzle," 46; idem, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in Its Cradle,'" 89–90; Department of State Airgram CA-43 to US Embassy in Bangkok et al., "Status of Program to Influence World Opinion with Respect to a Chinese Communist Nuclear Detonation," 20 July 1964, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38, doc. 14; Chester Bowles (US Ambassador to India) letter to Bundy, 16 September 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXV, *South Asia*, 153; McCone memorandum about meeting with Helms, 8 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 13. X

²⁹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Department of State, Policy Planning Council, "An Exploration of the Possible Bases for Action Against the Chinese Communist Nuclear Facilities," 14 April 1964, and "The Implications of a Chinese Communist Nuclear Capability," c. April 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXX, *China*, 39–40, 57–58; Bundy untitled memorandum about meeting with Rusk, McNamara, and McCone on 15 September 1964, and Komer untitled memorandum to Bundy, 18 September 1964, *ibid.*, 94, 96–99; Burr and Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in Its Cradle,'" 76–88; Robert H. Johnson (Department of State, Policy Planning Council) memorandum, "A Chinese Communist Nuclear Detonation and Nuclear Capability...", 15 October 1963, Rusk memorandum to the president, "Items for Evening Reading," 1 May 1964, Johnson memorandum, "The Chinese Communist Nuclear Capability and Some 'Unorthodox' Approaches to the Probability of Nuclear Proliferation," 2 September 1964, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38, docs. 10, 12, 13, and 15; Shane Maddock, "LBJ, China, and the Bomb: New Archival Evidence," *Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter* 27, no. 1 (March 1996): 1–5; Chang, chap. 9; Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China*, 191–92; Nancy B. Tucker, "Threats, Opportunities, and Frustrations in East Asia," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World*, 99–115; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 211. (U)

³⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Donald Chamberlain (OSI) memorandum to Carter, "Estimated Imminence of a Chinese Nuclear Test," 15 October 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXX, *China*, 107–8; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the National Security Council...17 October 1964," and Cline, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of an Executive Group of the National Security Council, 16 October 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 10; Peebles, *CORONA Project*, 226–27; Burr and Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in Its Cradle,'" 91–92; Armstrong et al., "The Hazards of Single-Outcome Forecasting," 246; Seaborg, *Stemming the Tide*, 112–17; *Journals of Glenn Seaborg*, vols. 7–9, entry for 16 October 1964, 254. X

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impact was muted. As Ray Cline later said, the administration had "pretty well prepared the world for expecting this event [without] becoming unduly alarmed by it." The White House released a statement, composed well in advance, that minimized the accomplishment. ~~XX~~

In retrospect, the community's main misjudgment was presuming that because the weapon would be plutonium-based, the Chinese would not be able to test a bomb as soon as they did. Instead, by developing a uranium-based device first, the Chinese were able to "join the atomic club" sooner than expected. (They did not explode a plutonium-based nuclear device until June 1967.) Moreover, Beijing's ability to develop fissile material on its own, rather than acquiring it from the Soviets, suggested that the proliferation problem was more serious than anticipated. Despite indications that a second test might occur soon after, the administration continued its display of calm confidence.³¹ ~~XX~~



Washington Post

The days of mid-October were fairly frantic for McCone, with the Chinese test coming right after Nikita Khrushchev's ouster as Soviet premier. The DCI participated in a flurry of briefings of policymakers and congressional leaders. He assured the NSC that Beijing would not have a sophisticated delivery capability for many years and that it was not then developing intercontinental missiles.

The failure of that high-priority mission put McCone in an embarrassing situation. According to DDS&T Albert Wheelon:

I had counseled McCone and [President] Kennedy that it was a long way in, and I was not sure we could make it. Air Force Brigadier General and Director, Office of Special Activities [OSA], Jack Ledford and I were at a Christmas party at McCone's house on a snowy night. McCone dragged us into his study to say, "I just want to reiterate to you two how important

³¹ The conclusions of a proliferation task force convened in December bolstered the policy. Headed by former Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, and including Allen Dulles, John J. McCloy, and George Kistiakowsky, the panel considered several options for curtailing the spread of nuclear weapons, among them attacking the PRC's strategic weapons facilities. In the end, it advised the president to use diplomatic means instead. The administration also continued to spurn recurrent Nationalist Chinese proposals to attack the mainland in force. [redacted] sent to brief President Chiang Kai-shek 10 days after the PRC's test, heard such a plan from the ROC leader, who displayed "a rather intense feeling of frustration and anxiety." NSAM No. 320, "Task Force on Nuclear Proliferation," 25 November 1964, and "A Report to the President by the Committee on Nuclear Proliferation," 21 January 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XI, Arms Control and Disarmament*, 126, 173-82; Burr and Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in Its Cradle,'" 93-94; US Embassy Taipei cable no. 347 to Department of State, 24 October 1964, on National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38, doc. 20. (U)

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[REDACTED] A little over two weeks after McCone left the Agency, the PRC exploded its second atomic device.³⁴ ~~XX~~

As usual, I went to the morning meeting and asked Ledford to come with me. John McCone walked in and looked around the room with those blue eyes of his and said, "Who authorized that mission?" I said [to myself], "Well, today is as good a day as any to quit this outfit." I responded, "I have a piece of paper with your signature, and Mac Bundy's and Bob McNamara's, and Dean Rusk's on it, telling me to do it." DDCI Carter, said, "That's right, sir, you ordered that mission." One could have heard a pin drop in that room. McCone closed his book, got up, and left... The subject was never mentioned again.³³ (U)

Throughout the post-test period, NRO continued its accelerated schedule of satellite launches to monitor developments at existing Chinese sites and to look for new ones.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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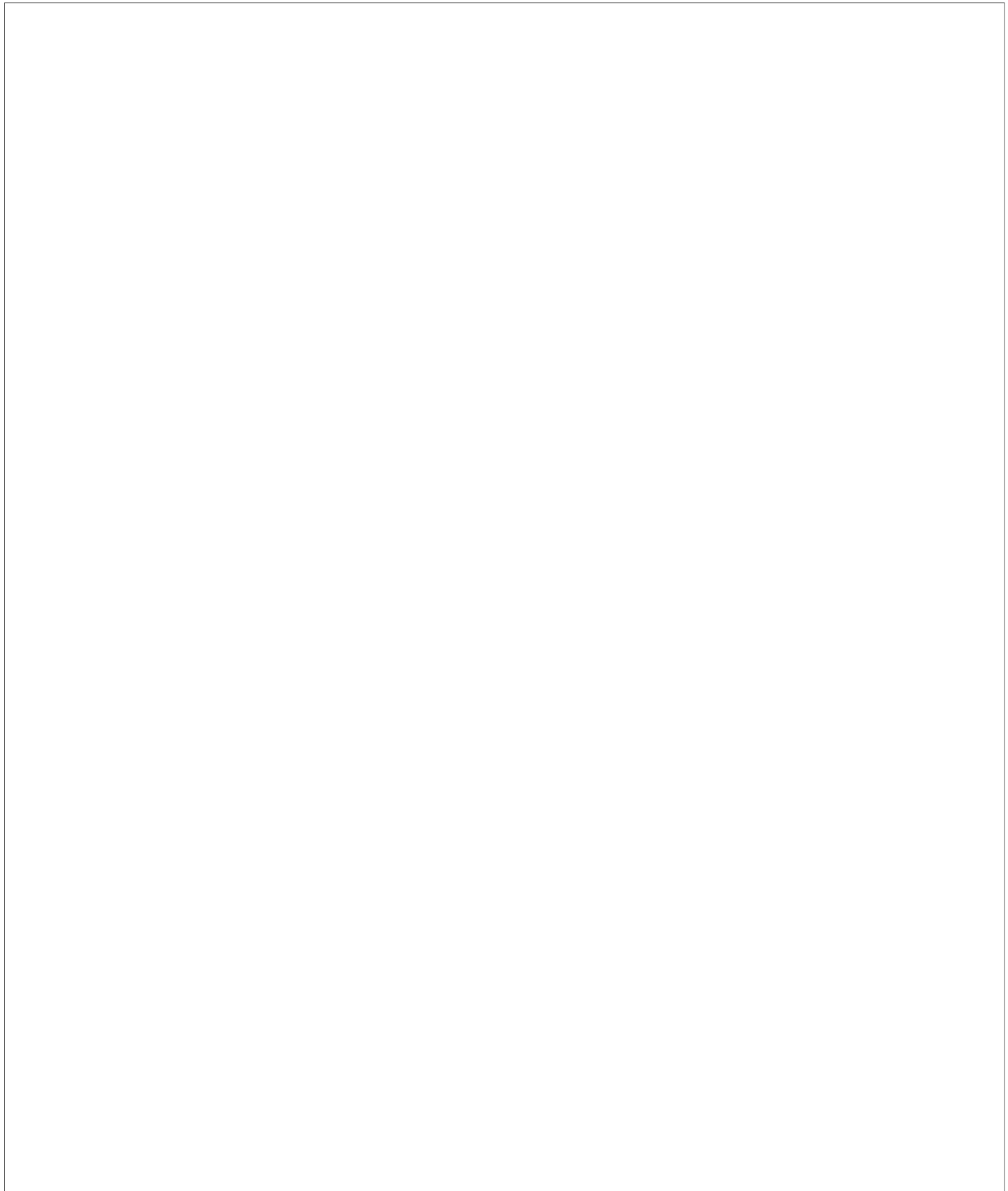
CA staff, "Covert Propaganda Operations Against Mainland China," under "Far East" tab in file "Covert Action Accomplishments 1 April-11 August 1963," HS Files, HS/CSG-675, Job 83-00036R, box 4, folder 17; FitzGerald memorandum to Meyer, "Briefing Material on Covert Action Operations Against Communist China," HS/CSG-309, 28 February 1961, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 9; Meyer memorandum to McCone, "CIA's Covert Action Program," 26 November 1963, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 15; *Annual Report for FY 1965*, 113-14; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Covert Action Program Against Communist China," 3 July 1963, *ibid.*; memorandum to Meyer, "Comments on C/FE Memo to D/P of 29 May 1963," 3 June 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 10; Karamessines memorandum to Helms, 11 September 1963, DDO Files, Job 79-07173A, box 1, folder 2;

White House background paper, "Visit of Chinese Minister of Defense Chiang Ching-kuo...September 21-28, 1965: Background Paper...U.S.-GRC Consultations Concerning Possible Action Against the Mainland"; Helms memorandum to Bundy, "Covert Exploitation of Sino-Indian Hostilities," 15 January 1963, DDO Files, 78-02958R, box 3, folder 15. ~~(S//NF)~~

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Still an Enigma (U)

As American involvement in Vietnam increased during the early Johnson presidency, policymakers put more pressure on CIA to improve its collection against the PRC. Following along lines McCone had laid out, USIB in mid-1965 reaffirmed the need for the Intelligence Community to develop a collection and analytical prowess against the PRC "commensurate with that against other highest priority targets." Progress was halting, however. Secretary of State Rusk spelled out the persistent problem in late 1965: "The difficult policy decisions and judgments we make concerning Peking are continually handicapped by insufficient information on its capabilities, intentions, actions, and strategy." The turmoil of the

Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s only made the Chinese target harder to work against, and collection efforts ended the decade in disarray. Despite efforts to fill the intelligence gap made during the tenures of McCone and his immediate successors, China was "still an enigma" in 1970, the Agency reported to PFIAB. Real advances in collection and analysis had to await the PRC's emergence in the early 1970s from its self-imposed isolation.⁴¹

⁴¹ Helms memorandum to DDP, DDI, and DDS&T, "Review of Intelligence Activities Against Communist China...", ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 386; *Annual Report of the Central Intelligence Agency to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (for Fiscal Year 1970)*, 25, ER Files, Job 80B01086A, box 3.

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McCone and the Secret Wars (I): Espionage and Covert Action (U)

John McCone's management of CIA's clandestine activities was conditioned on three facts. First, unsteeped in the argot and methodology of espionage and counterintelligence, he was more interested in analysis and technical collection than in secret operations. (One COS recalled that during McCone's introductory tour of stations and counterpart services in Europe in late 1961, the DCI asked him, "What, exactly, is a double agent?")¹ Second, nothing in McCone's background endeared him personally or professionally to careerists in the DDP. His years of federal service notwithstanding, he had not traveled in the same social circles as the elite Easterners and OSS veterans at the top of the operations hierarchy, and he was regarded as more of an "outsider" by the Clandestine Services than by other Agency components. (U)

Third, after the Bay of Pigs, the Kennedy White House was determined to control covert actions far more closely than when Allen Dulles was DCI. The bureaucratic changes the administration instituted for overseeing covert actions left the DCI with a reduced role in them—a limitation McCone worked to surmount. The administration created a simpler NSC apparatus than its predecessor used and gave more authority to the Special Group to plan and review CA operations. The Special Group, in turn, set up two subgroups: the Special Group Augmented, which directed efforts to topple Fidel Castro, and the Special Group Counterinsurgency, which by late 1962 oversaw secret projects in nearly a dozen Southeast Asian and Latin American countries. Authority over covert action was concentrated in the hands of Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, and, through much of 1962, the president's military adviser, Maxwell Taylor. CIA's independence decreased further in 1963 when the White House directed it to seek approval for all covert actions costing more than [] on a "cost and risk" basis. Before then, station and division chiefs had approval authority except in sensitive cases, which they referred to the ADDP, the DDP, or the

DCI, who decided whether to raise a project with one of the Special Groups. (Espionage operations were exempt from this outside review and authorization).² ~~X~~

McCone's lack of familiarity with clandestine operations and predilection for technology and analysis, along with the administration's close management of covert actions, meant that the new DCI's approach to managing the DDP would be more "hands off" than it would be with analysis and science and technology. He had no interest in being and no brief to adopt Allen Dulles's role as the "Great White Case Officer." McCone's DDP, Richard Helms, characterized McCone generally as "a very good manager...a quick study...a man with a firm hand." In the realm of clandestine activities, that meant the DCI delegated day-to-day responsibility to the respected and canny Helms, counting on his "chief operations officer's" experience in espionage and counterintelligence, keen political sense, and skepticism about covert action to restrain gung-ho operators, conspiratorialists, and other overly zealous Cold Warriors. At the same time, McCone became well-versed in operational details when he needed to be, insisting that his deputies regularly inform him about large or politically sensitive projects. For example, he routinely met with Helms after the morning staff meeting for a private briefing on close-hold operations, and he expected the Watch Office to notify him of developments in clandestine operations. Thus prepared, he would intrude himself in those activities, formally or informally, to whatever extent he or the White House deemed necessary.³ ~~X~~

Like most "manager-reformer/outsider" DCIs, McCone valued technical collection over traditional espionage, but unlike some later representatives of that type (such as James Schlesinger and Stansfield Turner), he did not denigrate HUMINT. Even though McCone spent much more of his time on overhead reconnaissance than field operations, he

¹ [] 235. (U)

² Anna Karalekas, "History of the Central Intelligence Agency," in [] *The Central Intelligence Agency*, 63, 79, 82–83; Department of State, "US Covert Actions and Counter-Insurgency Programs," in *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXIV, Africa*, xliii–xliv; Parmet, 213–14; Ranelagh, 411; [] The 1963 pronouncement on covert action approval modified procedures Allen Dulles had instituted in June 1960, by lowering the money threshold by [] and requiring White House (not just DCI) authorization. Dulles memorandum to DDCI, DDP, and DDS, "Approval of Clandestine Service Projects," 16 June 1960, HS Files, Job 83-000739R, box 5, folder 2. ~~X~~

³ Helms/McAuliffe OH, 1; Carter-Knoche OH, 79; Cline memorandum to Helms, "Operational Information for Watch," 14 May 1964, DDI Files, Job 89T01385R, box 1, folder 4. ~~X~~

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recognized that "spies in the sky" had significant limitations and must be used in conjunction with the recruitment and exploitation of well-placed, reliable human sources. Just as the CORONA program was gaining momentum, he cautioned senior Agency managers not to become transfixed by that achievement. "While satellite photography represents the best, and probably the most dependable[,] information available to us," he wrote to Helms, "we should be careful that we do not depend solely and exclusively on this source." The Soviets could deceive the satellites easily and inexpensively, McCone believed, so he urged the DDP to "exert every possible effort" to collect HUMINT on Soviet missile sites. In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, in which aerial reconnaissance had proved vital, the DCI warned the Intelligence Community against "drifting into a frame of mind that high-level photography is all we need, that it will show everything that must be seen." Without balanced collection, intelligence services "run the risk of making a serious error."⁴ ~~SECRET~~

Despite the Bay of Pigs fiasco, McCone neither chose nor was required by the White House to restructure or downsize the politically weakened DDP.

In addition, the Kennedy administration's push for CA and counterinsurgency operations in the Third World, where it had the greatest interest in containing communist influence, kept the Western Hemisphere, Far East, and Africa Divisions very busy. ~~(S//NF)~~

Changes to the Clandestine Services (U)

McCone instituted or endorsed readjustments in the ways DDP staffs and area divisions did business. The changes were intended to impose greater policy oversight, administrative rationality, operational effectiveness, and cost

⁴ McCone memoranda to Carter, 22 May 1962, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5, and 11 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 4 ~~SECRET~~

⁶ Helms memorandum to McCone, "CIA Representation Abroad," 10 April 1962, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 1; *Annual Report for FY 1965*, charts after 1; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...DCI's Presentation to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 26 June 1963," and "Memorandum for the Record...DCI Meeting with President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...13 September [1963]," DDO Files, Job 78-03805R, box 3, folder 12A; Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 4 February 1965," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 131. ~~SECRET~~

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instituted in [] but problems in Vietnam persisted as the US military presence there expanded.⁷ ~~XX~~

To enable CIA to conduct more effectively the paramilitary operations the White House wanted, McCone ratified establishment of the Special Operations Division (SOD) in July 1962. An internal survey conducted at the time McCone became DCI identified deficiencies in personnel, logistics, research and development, and management of the Agency's paramilitary programs and capabilities. One of the study's findings was that activities were so complex, extensive, and expensive that they needed to be centralized. Accordingly, SOD was created through a merger of the [] of the former Development Projects Division and the [] SOD became a self-contained unit that planned and ran land, sea, and air operations. It also proved more effective at getting the area divisions to use their expertise than had been the case under the previous arrangement, largely because it now had its own resources.⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone and his senior executives confronted a large management problem with the [] which directed a far-flung network of aviation cover companies the Agency used to support field operations. []

[] Following up on an IG recommendation that greater control be exercised over them, McCone in February 1963 approved DDCI Carter's establishment of an Executive Committee for Air Proprietary Operations (ExCom-Air), chaired by the general counsel. Eventually the DCI himself would review all major new projects and capital expenditures for the air proprietaries.⁹ ~~XX~~

Domestic Operations (U)

In the domestic collection area, McCone—acting on recommendations of the Kirkpatrick Working Group and DDP officer C. Tracy Barnes—in 1962 authorized the establishment of the Domestic Operations Division []

By then, McCone—who appreciated [] work on science, technology, and nuclear issues—was persuaded that it would be most effective as a collection unit for the DI rather than as a support unit for the DDP. Friction between [] and the FBI was minimized by proscribing the former from counterintelligence activity, []

[] caused recurrent tensions between the two organizations that were unresolved when McCone stepped down.¹⁰ ~~XX~~

⁷ Karamessines untitled memorandum to Chief, FI Staff, 9 May 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 2, folder 2; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 20 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14. ~~XX~~

⁸ "Status of Agency Paramilitary Posture and Capabilities," ca. April 1962, HS Files, HS/CSG-1875, Job 83-00036R, box 3, folder 8; [] 213. ~~XX~~

⁹ [] Meyer memorandum to Helms, "Policy Coordination Status of Covert Action Projects," 16 January 1963, tab D, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 19; Carter memorandum to Chairman, ExComAir, "Functions and Responsibilities of the ExComAir," Action Memorandum No. A-268, 2 August 1963, and Helms memorandum to DDP division and staff chiefs, "Clandestine Services Air Activities," 16 October 1963, HS Files, HS/CSG-2164, Job 83-00739R, box 5, folder 2; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 18 April 1963; [] "Air America, 1946-1972," History Staff Miscellaneous Historical Studies No. MISC-9, vol. 5, 392-93. ~~XX~~

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With one politically sensitive organization—the Peace Corps—McCone continued a strict “hands off” policy. “While Communist propagandists will always allege that the Peace Corps is used for intelligence activities,” he wrote to President Johnson, “I remain determined that no opportunity be afforded them to establish any justification for their allegation.” Accordingly, CIA would not employ any Peace Corps personnel until two years after they left that agency.¹² ~~XX~~

Mail Opening and Drug Testing (U)

McCone's former associates disagree over how engaged he was with two of CIA's most notorious clandestine operations inside the United States: examining mail sent to and from the Soviet Union (HTLINGUAL),¹³ and testing LSD and other mind-altering drugs on unwitting American subjects (MKULTRA).¹⁴ According to the Church Committee in 1976, no Agency documents show that McCone knew of the mail opening program, and McCone's testimony to that effect was consistent with the statements of James Angleton of the CI Staff and Howard Osborn, former head of the Soviet division and the Office of Security. McCone and Executive Assistant Elder have said the reasons he did not know CI Staff was reading American and Soviet mail were that HTLINGUAL was a small operation in place since

¹¹ [redacted] (DCI assistant) memorandum to Bross, “Deputies’ Meeting, 26 December 1961,” Action Memorandum No. 2, Bross memorandum to McCone, [redacted] 12 January 1962, [redacted] untitled memorandum to McCone, 23 January 1962, Earman memorandum concerning McCone meeting with [redacted] on 19 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; Bross memorandum to Archibald Roosevelt (CA Staff), “Deputies Meeting, 25 January 1962,” and [redacted] memorandum to Bissell, “Deputies’ Meeting, 25 January 1962,” Action Memorandum No. 4, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 34. ~~XX~~

¹² FitzGerald, “Memorandum of Conversation... Meeting with David Rockefeller,” 27 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 9; McCone letter to [redacted] 22 January 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 5; numerous entries of meetings with US businessmen on McCone calendars, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 8, folder 10; DCI Directives 2/3 and 2/8, both effective 25 July 1963, DCI Files, Job 86T00268R, box 2, folder 12; McCone letter to President Johnson, 24 August 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 12. Former Peace Corps personnel could work for Agency proprietaries under two conditions: “the employing or using activity must not be engaged in covert activities” and the employee “must not be engaged directly by, or receive direction from, CIA.” CA Staff Notice No. 20-18, 1 April 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 12. ~~XX~~

¹³ In early 1952, CIA—with the concurrence of the US Post Office—began scanning the exteriors of letters sent from the United States to the Soviet Union. During the first three years of the operation, Agency security officers occasionally opened some letters without Post Office knowledge. In late 1955, James Angleton, head of the CI Staff, took over the program and proposed that CIA review all mail to and from the Soviet Union that went through New York and open about two percent of the letters (approximately 400) monthly. Richard Helms, then the Chief of Operations in the DDP, approved this phase of the program, which began in early 1956. HTLINGUAL was terminated in 1973. For brief periods, US mail to and from Cuba and Communist China was examined under similar programs. US Senate, *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, 7 vols. (hereafter *Church Committee Report*), vol. 3, 567–624; Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States, *Report to the President* (hereafter *Rockefeller Commission Report*), chap. 9; Fischer, 98–99. (U)

¹⁴ Prompted by reports that the Soviets were experimenting with “mind-control” substances, CIA began investigating the intelligence applications of mind-altering drugs in the late 1940s. The project, called BLUEBIRD, initially worked on developing countermeasures to interrogation techniques using drugs. In 1951, a larger project named ARTICHOKE looked into the operational use of unconventional interrogation methods, including drugs and hypnosis. Reports that the Chinese had “brainwashed” prisoners during the Korean War gave further urgency to these inquiries. From 1953 on, the Agency's efforts were combined with similar undertakings by the US military, as well as research on behavior modification and poisons, into an umbrella program managed by the DDP's Technical Services Staff (later, the Technical Services Division). *Rockefeller Commission Report*, 226–28; “Behavioral Drugs and Testing,” CIA memorandum prepared for Rockefeller Commission, 11 February 1975, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 10, folder 187; *Church Committee Report*, vol. 1, 387–422; US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research of the Committee on Human Resources, *Project MKULTRA, the CIA's Program of Research in Behavioral Modification*, passim; [redacted] 101–04; John D. Marks, *The Search for the “Manchurian Candidate”*, passim. ~~XX~~

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1952, was never presented to the DCI for renewal, was not a line item in the Agency budget, and did not produce anything worth bringing to McCone's attention. Richard Helms, on the other hand, has said that HTLINGUAL "was well known to John McCone, even though he denies ever having known about it." McCone's careful attention to CIA's role in the investigation of Kennedy's assassination supports Helms's assertion. Some of the information the Agency developed on President Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, came from examinations of his mail under HTLINGUAL, and it seems implausible that the DCI would not have been told, even in passing, about the program after the assassination (see Chapter 14). Furthermore, DDCI Carter was told in February 1965 that congressional inquiries into mail surveillance might touch on HTLINGUAL, and it seems unlikely that he would not have forewarned the DCI about the details of such a potentially damaging controversy. The preponderance of evidence indicates, therefore, that McCone most likely was aware of at least part of the program—the mail examinations if not the openings—possibly by late 1963 or early 1964.¹⁵ ~~XX~~

Similarly, recollections differ about the surreptitious drug tests.¹⁶ The evidence indicates that McCone not only knew about them but disapproved of them sufficiently to order their suspension. According to the Church Committee report, McCone did not learn all the details of MKULTRA until Helms—possibly in anticipation of a critical IG report on the program—informed him in mid-1963. According to Helms, McCone raised no objection to unwitting testing at the time. McCone testified to the Church Committee, however, that no one had told him about the project in a way that "would have turned on all the lights."¹⁷ ~~XX~~

Some confusion might have arisen in McCone's mind over the nature and scope of the MKULTRA program. MKULTRA technically was only an accounting device used to designate a broad range of investigations into human psychology and behavior managed by DDP's Technical Services Division under Dr. Sidney Gottlieb. Work with pharmacological and biological agents was only part of the program,

and most of the money was spent on prosaic and largely ethical psychological tests, literature surveys, and chemical analyses (most of which took place in American universities and research institutions without CIA's sponsorship made known). The most troubling aspect of MKULTRA was the administration of psychotropic drugs to unwitting subjects in what were called "normal life settings"—which included hospitals, prisons, and safe-houses ~~XX~~



Sidney Gottlieb (U)

These tests, although few in number and relatively inexpensive, represented a key facet of MKULTRA. Any formal briefing given McCone on the overall project presumably would have explained the program's very broad, and mostly benign, scope and glossed over the details of the secret experiments.¹⁸ ~~XX~~

After the IG in 1963 recommended closing the safehouses in San Francisco and New York, McCone suspended testing on unwitting subjects but put off a final decision on the program as a whole. During the next year, Helms recommended to Carter (as acting DCI) that blind testing be resumed. Helms warned that "an apparent Soviet aggressiveness in the field of covertly administered chemicals" was "inexplicable and disturbing" but that the Agency's "positive operational capability to use drugs is diminishing, owing to a lack of realistic testing." The experiments, Helms believed, could not be validated without unwitting subjects. He also worried that "decreasing knowledge of the state of the art...results in a waning capability on our part to restrain others in the intelligence community (such as the Department of Defense) from pursuing operations in this area." However, Carter—who told his own deputy in late 1963 that "I am scared to death of this

¹⁵ Church Committee Report, vol. 3, 581; Elder, ~~XX~~ OH, 9; McCone letter to Elder, 21 January 1975, ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 14, folder 316; Helms, ~~XX~~ DH, 1; John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA*, 283–87; DCI morning meeting minutes for 24 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 349. ~~XX~~

¹⁶ Sources for this paragraph and the next two are: Church Committee Report, vol. 1, 401–02, 406; notes of Carter meeting with Knoche on 18 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 29 November 1963; Earman, "Summary of Inspector General's Report of Inspection of MKULTRA," 26 July 1963, and "Memorandum for the Record...MKULTRA Program," 29 November 1963, MORI doc. nos. 146197 and 146165; Helms memorandum to Carter, "Testing of Psychochemicals and Related Materials," 17 December 1963, Carter untitled memorandum to Helms, 24 December 1963, Helms memorandum to McCone (signed by Carter), "Sensitive Research Programs (MKULTRA)," 9 June 1964, Knoche untitled memorandum to Elder, 23 July 1964, and Helms memorandum to McCone, "Unwitting Testing," 9 November 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 18, folder 8; McCone calendar entry for 13 November 1964 (meeting with Carter, Helms, Earman, and Gottlieb); DDCI Daily Log, 2 December 1964, *ibid.*, box 13, folder 10. ~~XX~~

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one"—ordered the suspension continued, pending the DCI's decision. Carter also refused to endorse the use of non-Americans in the tests. McCone took no further action, which effectively killed what would become MKULTRA's most controversial aspect. ~~XX~~

The Wall of Separation (U)

McCone encountered resistance from senior DDP managers when he tried to increase DI participation in operational planning [REDACTED] but interdirectorate cooperation had improved by the end of his tenure.¹⁷ [REDACTED]

Wisner's Breakdown (U)

McCone's circumspect handling of the delicate problem of the venerated Frank Wisner's psychological decline went some way toward allaying DDP concerns that this brusque stranger from the business world would be insensitive to the morale and loyalty of the closed Clandestine Services community. Wisner was CIA's premier covert operations officer during its first decade.¹⁹ He was an OSS veteran who had headed the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), the US government's covert action arm, from 1948 to 1951 and had

¹⁸ Robert Amory, the DDI at the time of the Bay of Pigs, later expressed the "if only you'd asked me" resentment many analytical officers felt about being cut out of planning for the operation:

I was never in on any of the consultations either inside the Agency or otherwise.... At least on paper I knew more about amphibious warfare than anyone else in the Agency. I had made 26 assault landings in the South Pacific, Southwest Pacific and so on—and of about the same size, many of them, as the Bay of Pigs. Whereas the Marine they had advising them had made one...and that was Iwo Jima, which was three divisions abreast.

Andrew, 261. (U)

¹⁹ Information on Wisner comes from his official personnel file, [REDACTED] and Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, chaps. 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 21, ~~XX~~

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become DDP before OPC merged with the Office of Special Operations, which ran espionage operations, in 1952. Wisner was a brilliant, energetic, and fervid anticommunist, committed to rolling back the Soviet Union on all fronts, but especially in his own area of expertise, Eastern Europe, through an agglomeration of paramilitary, political, propaganda, and psychological operations dubbed "the mighty Wurlitzer."²⁰



Frank Wisner (U)

in the old East Building. He spent most of his time running his farm, managing his investments, collecting Greek artifacts, and reviewing books on espionage. In March 1965, he sent a letter to McCone conveying his distress that NBC Television was planning to run a documentary on CIA that contained "inaccuracies, distortions, and...ugly myths, many of which are of demonstrably communist origin." McCone politely agreed with Wisner, but he had already done his share of complaining to magazine publishers and network producers. McCone did not see Wisner again. In October 1965, Wisner had another breakdown and killed himself.²⁰

Liaison Activities (U)

Lastly, McCone fulfilled his duties as the US government's top-ranking intelligence "diplomat" through dozens of meetings with high-level foreign leaders and liaison representatives overseas and at Headquarters. He took 10 business trips outside the United States during his tenure—five to Western Europe, three to Southeast Asia, and two to Latin America—and he held policy and intelligence discussions with heads of government, cabinet ministers, service chiefs, and military commanders. On these trips, McCone was highly conscious of status and protocol, preferring to deal only with officials of commensurate rank and to discuss only the most important bilateral intelligence topics. According to Helms, who accompanied the DCI several times, McCone was so accustomed to dealing with the top level of leaders in the United States and foreign countries that he did not seem to think meeting relatively junior foreign officers for operational discussions was time well spent, despite the benefits to the liaison relationship. He did not want trips to include successions of courtesy calls and a social whirl of parties and sightseeing. Instead, he insisted they deal with official matters of substance, and be scheduled for maximum efficiency and thoroughly documented. As a gesture of appreciation to helpful foreigners, McCone instituted a practice he had followed in the private sector of sending birthday greetings to people overseas who worked closely with the Agency. He enjoyed at least cordial relations with the major Western and Asian services, except for France's. Relations with the French had been poisoned by a KGB defector's charges that the Soviets had riddled the French government with agents (see Chapter 13).²¹

and senior officers, McCone temporarily took Wisner on as a special assistant, after which he would resign and become a consultant to the DCI and DDP on operations. McCone and his deputies placed few demands on Wisner. After Wisner left the Agency in August 1962, he wrote some reports on intelligence and political topics, working out of an office

²⁰ Wisner letter to McCone, 12 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 32, folder 9; Wisner letter to McCone, 4 July 1962, Elder, "Memorandum for the Record on Conversation Between Mr. McCone and Mrs. Frank Wisner," 21 June 1962, [redacted], and McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Frank Wisner on July 10, 1962," McCone Papers, box 5, folder 7; Carter memorandum, 7 September 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01676R, box 13, folder 5; DDCI Daily Log, 3 October 1962, *ibid.*, box 13, folder 9; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 315–20.

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Covert Action and Intelligence Policy (U)

Befitting his roles as intelligence director and presidential adviser, McCone deeply involved himself in numerous high-profile covert action programs that were important elements of the Kennedy administration's national security policy.²² The administration regarded covert political operations as essential weapons in the struggle against the Soviet Union and the PRC for influence in the Third World. That predisposition, combined with longstanding bipartisan support for such activities and Allen Dulles's active patronage of them, meant that McCone did not need to "sell" the Agency's CA capabilities to the nation's new policymakers.

McCone, along with the chairman of the JCS, the deputy secretary of defense, the under secretary of state for political affairs, and the president's national security adviser, was a member of the NSC's Special Group (renamed the 303 Committee in 1964), which usually met twice monthly to review and authorize covert action proposals.²³ The Special Group was, as Richard Helms later described it, "the mechanism that was set up...to use as a circuit breaker so that these things did not explode in the president's face and that he was not held responsible for them." During the

Kennedy administration, the Special Group approved or reconfirmed [redacted] alone. Sensitive proposals had to have McCone's approval (or, in McCone's absence, the DDCI's) before they were submitted for Special Group consideration. The DCI met weekly with Carter, Elder, Helms, CA Staff chief Cord Meyer, and appropriate DDP division representatives to review the plans.²⁴ McCone required proposals to include a budget statement indicating if the funds were available in the area division or the directorate, or if some adjustment of accounts or further congressional authorization were necessary. In mid-1962, the DCI assured PFIAB that, in a not-so-subtle contrast with his predecessor's sometimes haphazard approach, "all covert action programs are now handled in an orderly, correct manner."~~XX~~

McCone did not, however, descend to the field-level management in which Dulles reveled. Instead, he remained at the policymaking stratum, helping formulate the goals and outlines of the larger or more potentially problematic covert actions and monitoring their execution. He left their implementation to his expert deputies, Helms and Meyer. Over the course of his directorship, McCone tended increasingly to submit only large CA proposals and sensitive election operations for Special Group review. Otherwise, he let the DDP operate under prior directives when its responsibility and authority were clear. (Those lower-profile projects were vetted with the local ambassador or with Department of State leadership.) In late 1963, however, McCone directed the DDCI to undertake what would now be called a "zero-base" review of all CA projects—then numbering

²¹ McCone calendars; DCI trip files in McCone Papers, box 5, folders 1-4, and box 8, folder 11; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 1; DDP staff meeting minutes, 17 May and 22 June 1962, and Helms memorandum to McCone on guidance to stations concerning DCI trips, 11 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; DDP divisions' memoranda of important contacts' birthdays, *ibid.*, folder 28. ~~XX~~

²² Sources for the first three paragraphs of this section are: [redacted] 213; Meyer memorandum to McCone, "CIA's Covert Action Program," 26 November 1963, HS Files, Job 83-00036R, box 10, folder 15; Meyer memorandum to Helms, "Policy Coordination Status of Covert Action Projects," 16 January 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 19; "Covert Action Briefing Data, Total CA Budget—FY 1964-67"; Michael Warner, "Sophisticated Spies: CIA's Links to Liberal Anti-Communists, 1949-1967," *IJIC* 9, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 429; [redacted]

NSAM No. 57, 28 June 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, VIII, *National Security Policy*, 112; Church Committee, *Assassination Plots*, 150; Elder memorandum to DDCI, DDP and Chief/CA Staff, Action Memorandum B-9, 22 May 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 2, folder 6; Kirkpatrick memorandum to DDP, DDI, DDR, and DDS, "Preparation of Material and Briefings for the 5412 Group," 18 June 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 16; DDP staff meeting minutes, 17 and 31 May 1962, *ibid.*, box 1, folder 40; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on CA Matters with the Panel of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 25 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Helms memorandum to Carter, "Covert Action Project Funds, FY 1964 and FY 1965," 4, in "Covert Action Project Funds FY 1964 and FY 1965 (With Historical Perspective, December 1947-January 1964)," *Annual Report for FY 1964*, budget chart after 4, and *Annual Report for FY 1965*, budget chart after 1; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 13 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 3; CIA memorandum, "Coordination and Policy Approval of Covert Operations," 23 February 1967, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 7; Church Committee Report, vol. 1, 52, 56-57; Jessup OH, 20; Elder/McAuliffe OH2, 14. Early in 1962, the International Organizations Division (IO) merged into the CA Staff, and Cord Meyer, head of IO, became chief of the combined unit. [redacted]

²³ After the existence of Special Group 5412 was disclosed in the book *The Invisible Government* in 1964, it was renamed the 303 Committee. Jessup memorandum to Bundy, "Proposed Name Change for Special Group (5412)," 19 May 1964 and NSAM No. 303, "Change in Name of Special Group 5412," 2 June 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 451-53; "Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 4 June 1964," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7. ~~XX~~

²⁴ This procedure did not preclude standard informal coordination with other agencies, nor did it apply to Directorate of Research, Task Force W (MONGOOSE), or counterinsurgency activities. The latter two were handled by the Special Group Augmented and the Special Group Counterinsurgency, as described in previous chapters. (U)

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[redacted] to determine which activities warranted Special Group reauthorization. Of the [redacted] projects the DCI approved for Special Group discussion, those examined below illustrate aspects of McCone's leadership, including his roles in formulating foreign policy, contacting the business community, taking on bureaucratic rivals, sensing political and diplomatic concerns, and keeping ties to the Kennedys. ~~(S)~~

Latin America (U)

"Latin America required our best efforts and attention" because it was "the most dangerous area in the world," President Kennedy said in 1963. Most foreign policy problems "paled in comparison with the prospect of the establishment of a Communist regime" in the Western Hemisphere. In the decade preceding the Kennedy presidency, 13 Latin countries had undergone violent or extra-constitutional changes of government. The new administration—fearing that the impoverished and oppressed masses of the region would embrace leftist panaceas—undertook a two-track approach to encourage economic development and social reform. Overtly, a Marshall Plan-style initiative called the Alliance for Progress provided billions of dollars in foreign aid and technical expertise, and the US military ran training and assistance programs for local armed forces and security services. [redacted]

Helms told his staff in early 1962 that "it is imperative to

realize the extent to which WH [Division] is the 'wave of the future'" for the Agency. ²⁵ ~~(S)~~

McCone underscored the point with three direct actions. He ordered a full IG survey of WH Division for presentation to him in the first week of his tenure. He participated in regional COS conferences [redacted] in 1962 and 1963. Lastly, he approved a [redacted]

McCone closely followed the Agency's CA operations in *Chile*—the second largest set of such projects in the Western Hemisphere after Cuba. ²⁷ The US government had long regarded Chile as an exemplar of democracy and capitalism in a region largely run by juntas and *hacenderos*, and the country became the showcase for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' nonviolent efforts to combat Latin radicalism. Those initiatives in Chile included both large amounts of overt foreign aid—more dollars per capita than to any

²⁵ Memorandum about President Kennedy's meeting with Ambassador to Peru J. Wesley Jones, 25 January 1963, memorandum about Kennedy's meeting with UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, 30 June 1963, and Kennedy untitled memorandum to Rusk, 29 October 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XII, American Republics*, 159, 609, 880; DDP staff meeting minutes, 5 April 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 40; Barber and Ronning, Appendix A. ~~(S)~~

²⁶ Meyer memorandum to McCone, "CIA's Covert Action Program," 26 November 1963, HS Files, Job 83-00036R, box 10, folder 15; Helms memorandum to McCone, "CIA Civic Action Activities in Latin America," 26 April 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 15; McLean, vol. 1, xix, vol. 2, 239, 245, 263; Knapp, 216; Meyer memorandum to Elder, "Covert Action Project Funds, FY 1964," 2 December 1963, HS Files, Historical Study MISC-13.5, folder "CA Policy Planning Documents"; 1962 Western Hemisphere chiefs of station conference materials in McCone Papers, box 8, folder 11; J.C. King memorandum to McCone, "Western Hemisphere Division Comments on the Covert Intelligence Annex (III) to the South America Assessment Team Report," 16 March 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 10; "Covert Action Project Funds, FY 1964 and FY 1965," tab 4. [redacted]

²⁷ The principal sources for this discussion are:

[redacted] T.F. Schmidt, "Election Operation in Chile," *Studies* 35, no. 4 (winter 1991): 43–48; Chile—Special Group Actions in appendix to "Covert Action Project Funds FY 1964 and FY 1965"; William V. Broe (DDP) memorandum to Helms, "U.S. Government Involvement in 1964 Chilean Election," 6 November 1970, ER Files, Job 80R01284R, box 7, folder 11; Peter Jessup (NSC), minutes of Special Group meetings on 19 December 1963, 1, 12, and 14 May, 21 August, and 11 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 1, folders 6 and 7; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with President Johnson, December 27th, 1963," *ibid.*, box 6, folder 6; King memorandum to McCone, "Political Action Program in Chile," 3 January 1964, DDO Files, Job 80-01690R, box 1, folder 24; King memorandum to McCone, "... Agency Action for the 4 September 1964 Chilean Presidential Election," 19 and 27 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 18, folder 370; CIA memorandum to Special Group, "Support for the Chilean Presidential Elections of 4 September 1964," 1 April 1964, National Security Council/303 Committee Files, Subject Files/Chile through 1969, LBJ Library; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group, 30 April 1964," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7; Church Committee, *Hearings before the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities of the United States Senate. Volume 7. Covert Action*, Appendix A, "Covert Action in Chile, 1963–1973," 151–64, 204; CIA, "CIA Activities in Chile," 18 September 2000, posted on CIA public Web site at www.internet.cia/cia/publications/chile, 2–3, 5; *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico*, docs. 245–277 on 545–608; Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, 109–16; Paul E. Sigmond, *The United States and Democracy in Chile*, chap. 2; *idem*, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964–1976*, chap. 3. ~~(S)~~

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nation except Vietnam—

An NSC memorandum in 1962 declared that "We are not prepared to risk a Socialist or FRAP [Frente de Acción Popular] victory, for fear of nationalization of U.S. investments...and the probably Communist influence in a Socialist (or FRAP) government." If the FRAP won the presidency in the September 1964 election—a distinct possibility, given the slumping economy and feuding among the nonsocialist parties—it would be the first time in history that an avowedly Marxist government gained power in an independent country through democratic processes. US policymakers believed a socialist regime in Chile would give the Soviet Union a satellite in Latin America that potentially was more useful than Cuba for starting a radical "chain reaction" in unstable countries in the region, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia.²⁸ ~~(S)~~

McCone and the Special Group/303 Committee reviewed and approved a succession of DDP proposals to prevent a leftist—most likely Salvadore Allende de Gossens—from becoming president of Chile in 1964.

The presidential election project alone cost nearly \$3 million. McCone and the Special Group initially agreed to DDP proposals to give money to the Radical Party (actually a moderate organization), the Christian Democrats, and the governing Democratic Front coalition, as well as to anti-Allende civic



Salvadore Allende campaigning in 1964 (U)

organizations. After the Democratic Front began falling apart and the FRAP showed alarming strength in local elections in 1963 and early 1964, the Special Group approved the Agency's reorientation toward the Christian Democratic candidate, Eduardo Frei Montalvo.

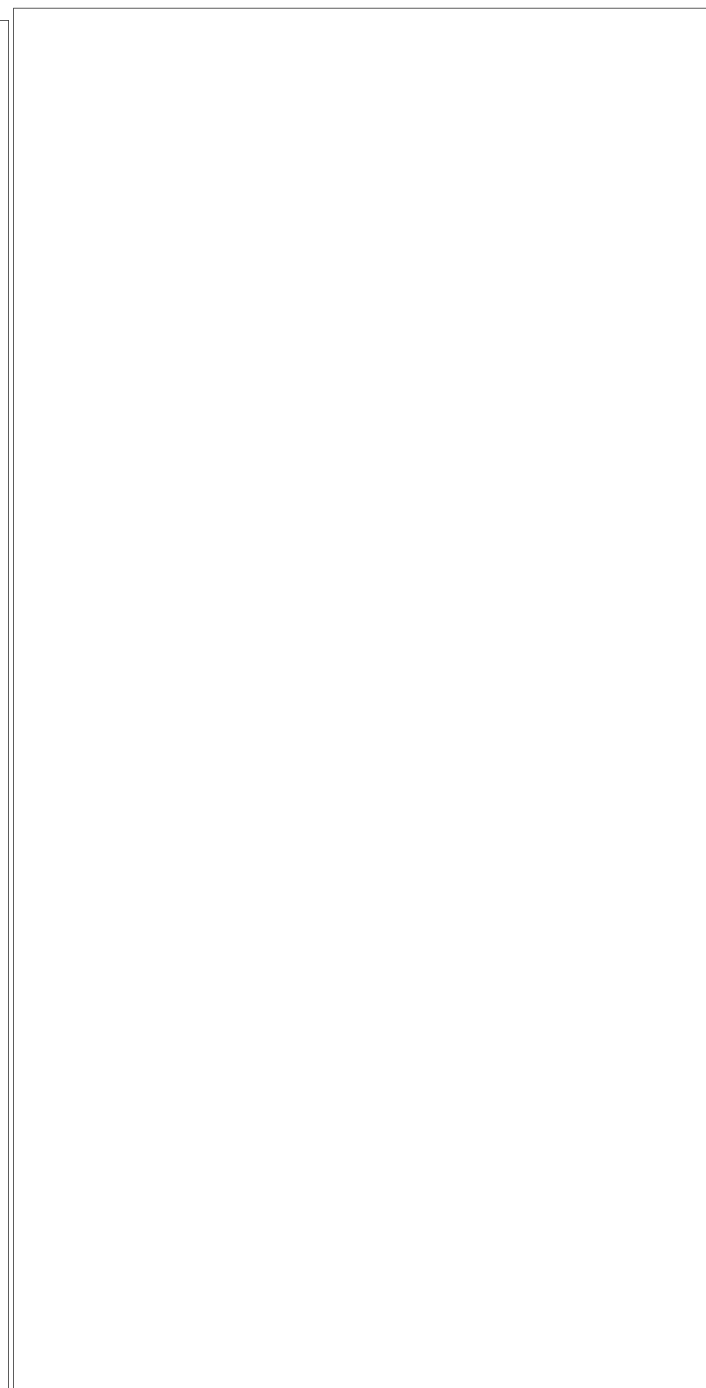
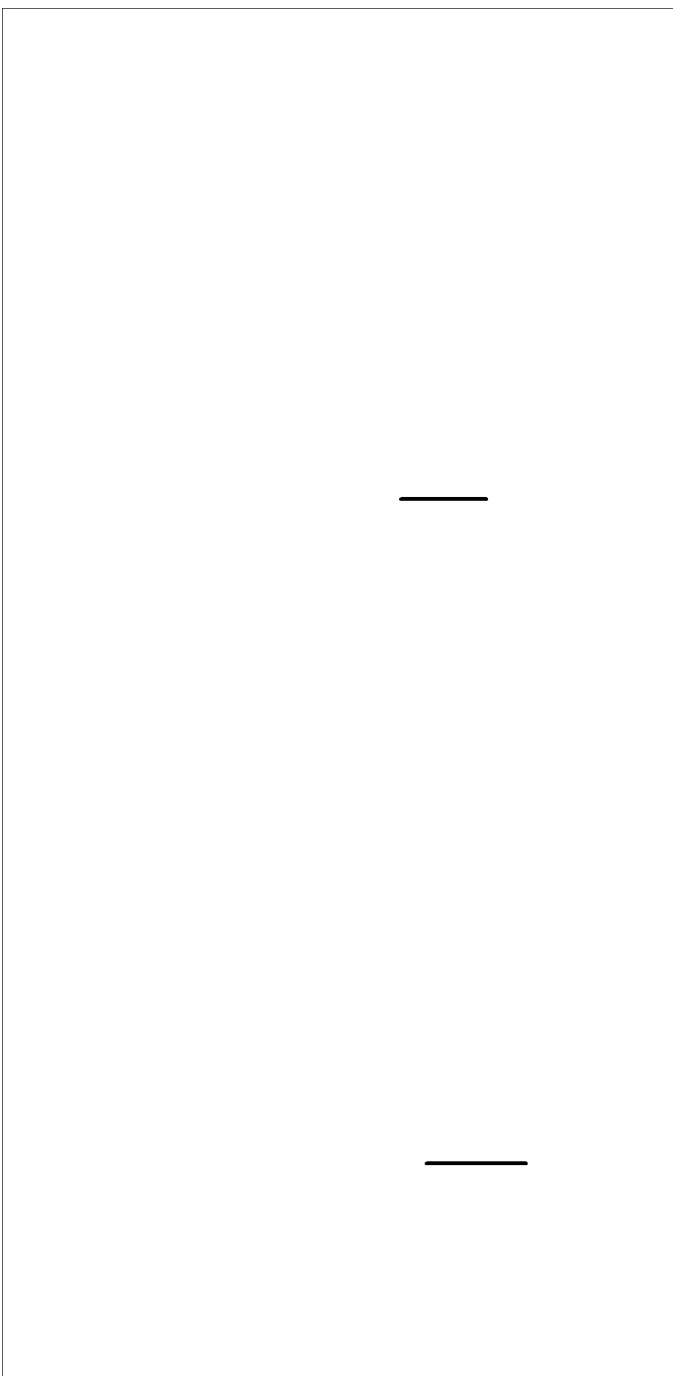
McCone at first questioned the wisdom of the shift in resources. He noted that Chilean business interests seemed less concerned about the election's outcome than the US government and that the Christian Democrats' platform had some of the same policies as that of the Socialists. The Special Group decided, however, that the expenditures were vital, as many observers gave FRAP candidate Allende (who received Soviet and Cuban funds) a fair chance of winning and embarking on policies of nationalization, land reform, and other "progressive" measures. When the ballots were counted, Frei had won 56 percent of the vote—the first absolute majority in any Chilean presidential election since 1942. The magnitude of his victory was widely regarded as a popular repudiation of communism. ~~(S)~~

²⁸ Although McCone shared this interpretation, he did not try to sway Agency estimators, who judged in late 1963 that the FRAP's chances for victory had slipped. NIE 94-63, "The Chilean Situation and Prospects," 3 October 1963, 1-2. ~~(S)~~

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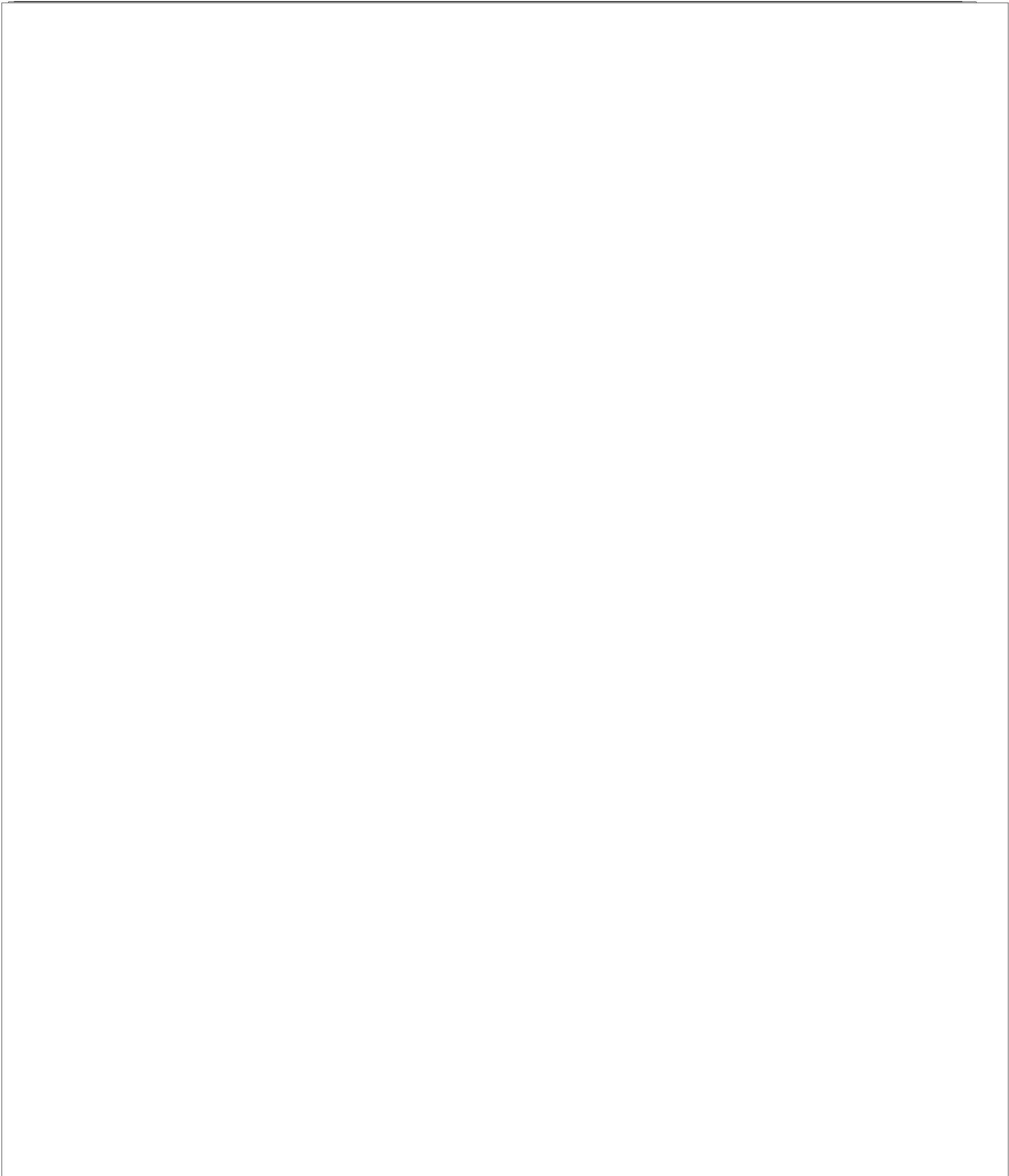


³⁰ Jessup minutes of Special Group meetings on 20 April, 1 and 12 May, and 11 September 1964. McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7; transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Ball, 7 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 6; transcript of McCone meeting with [redacted] 1 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 10; Broe memorandum to Helms, "U.S. Government Involvement in 1964 Chilean Election," 6 November 1970, ER Files, Job 80R01284R, box 7, folder 11; King memorandum to McCone, [redacted] 15 May 1964, *ibid.*, Job 80R01580R, box 18, folder 365; Elder memorandum to DCI William Colby, "Special Activities," in "Family Jewels" compendium, 459; *Annual Report for FY 1965*, 117-18. ~~(S//NF)~~



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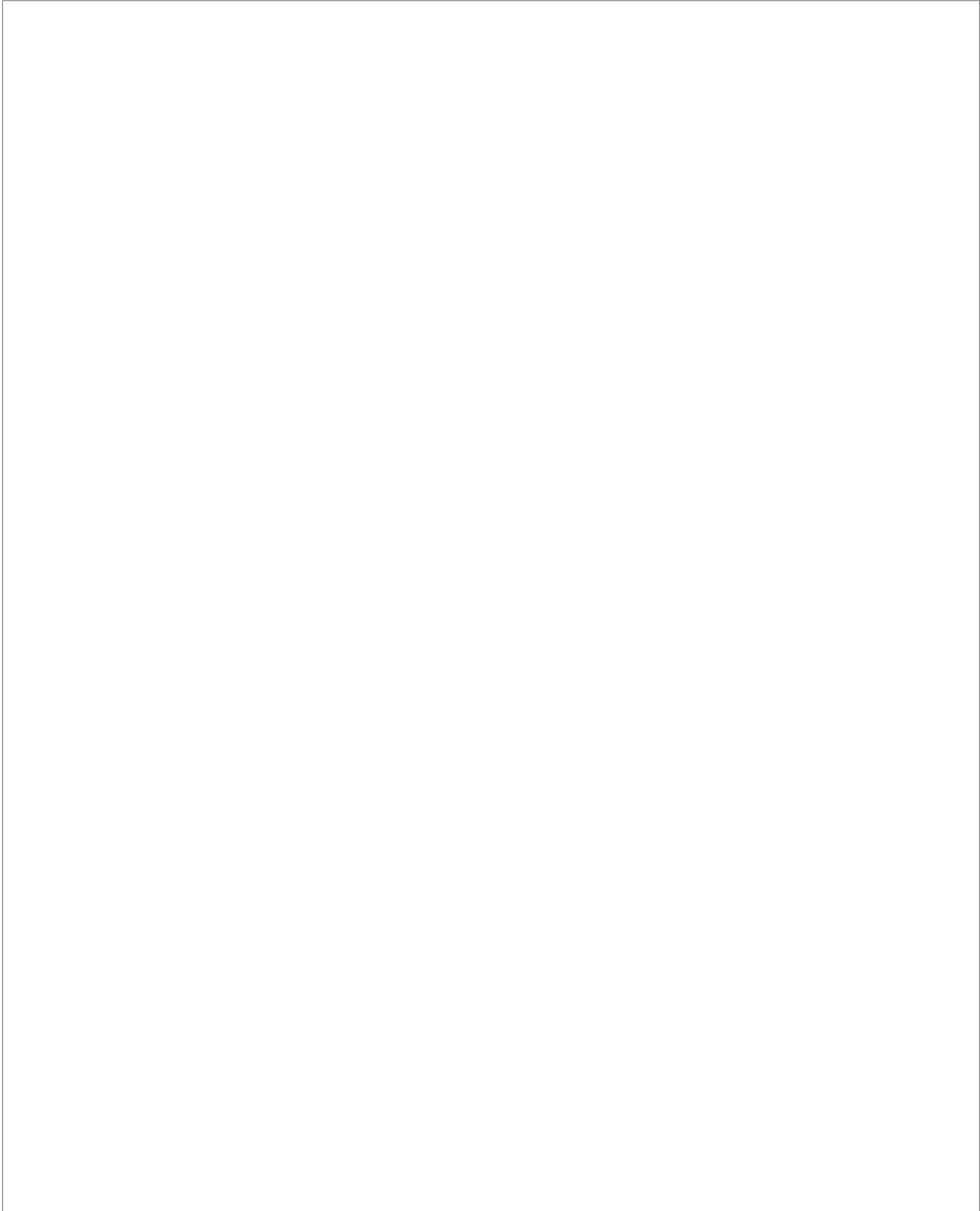
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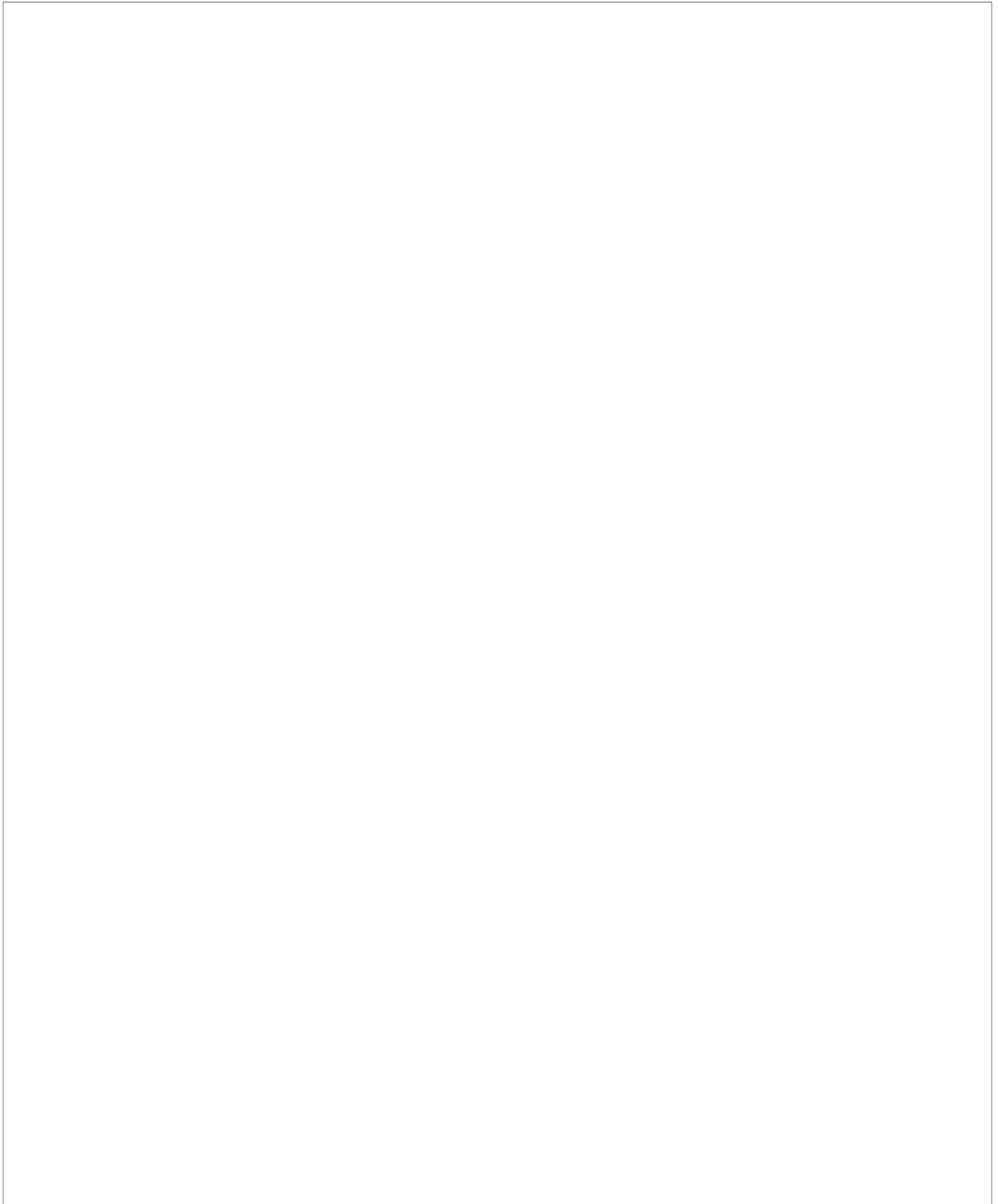
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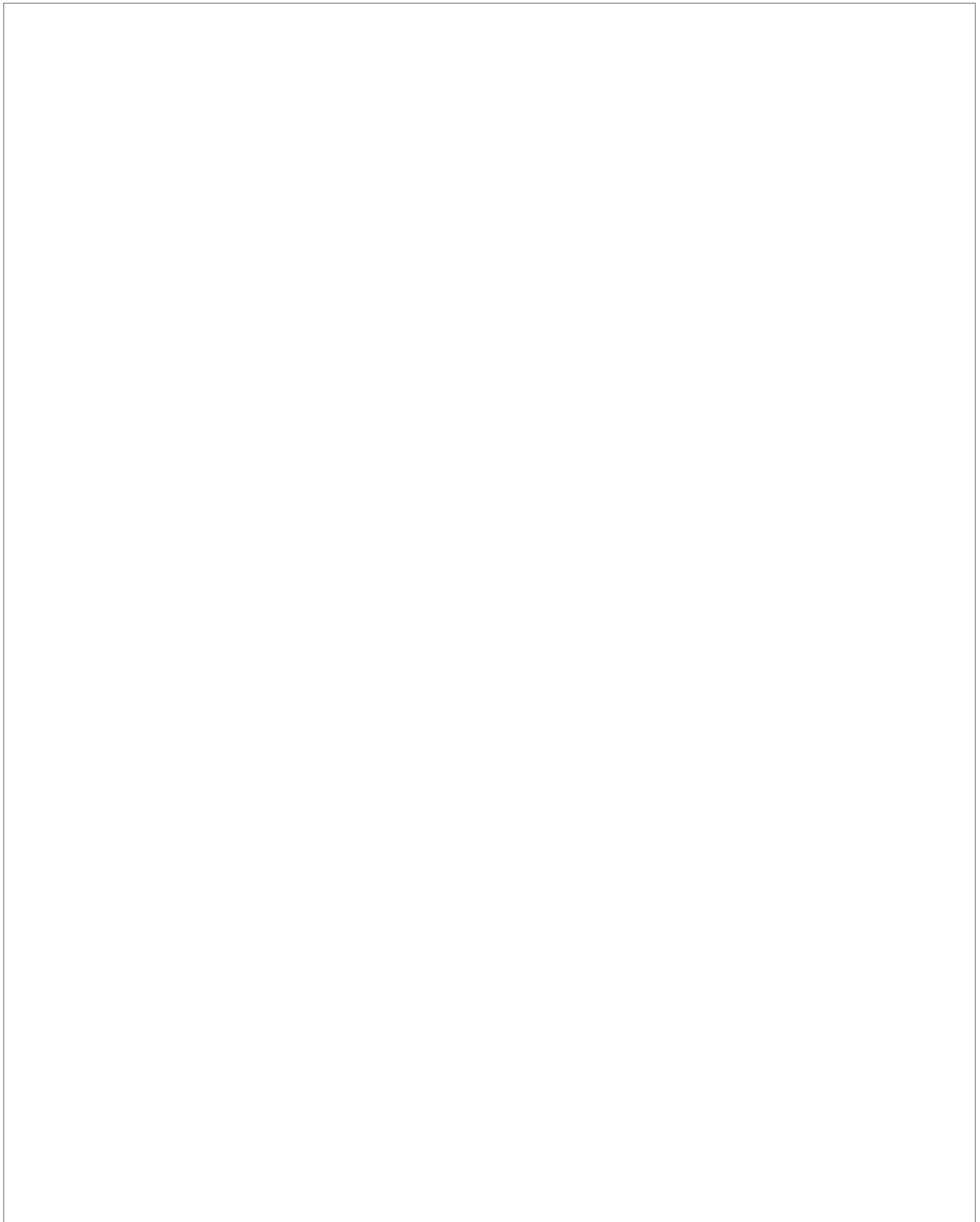
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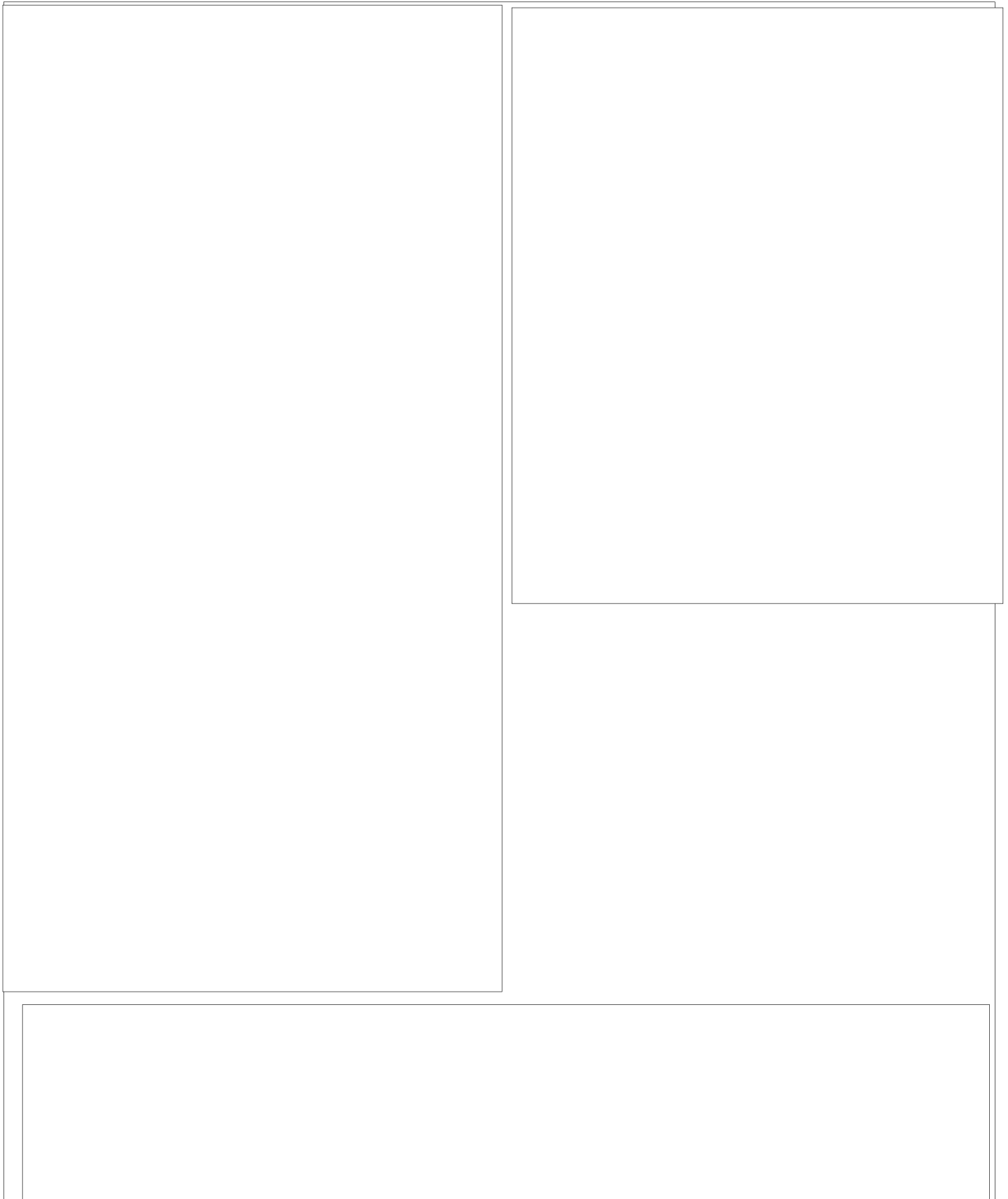
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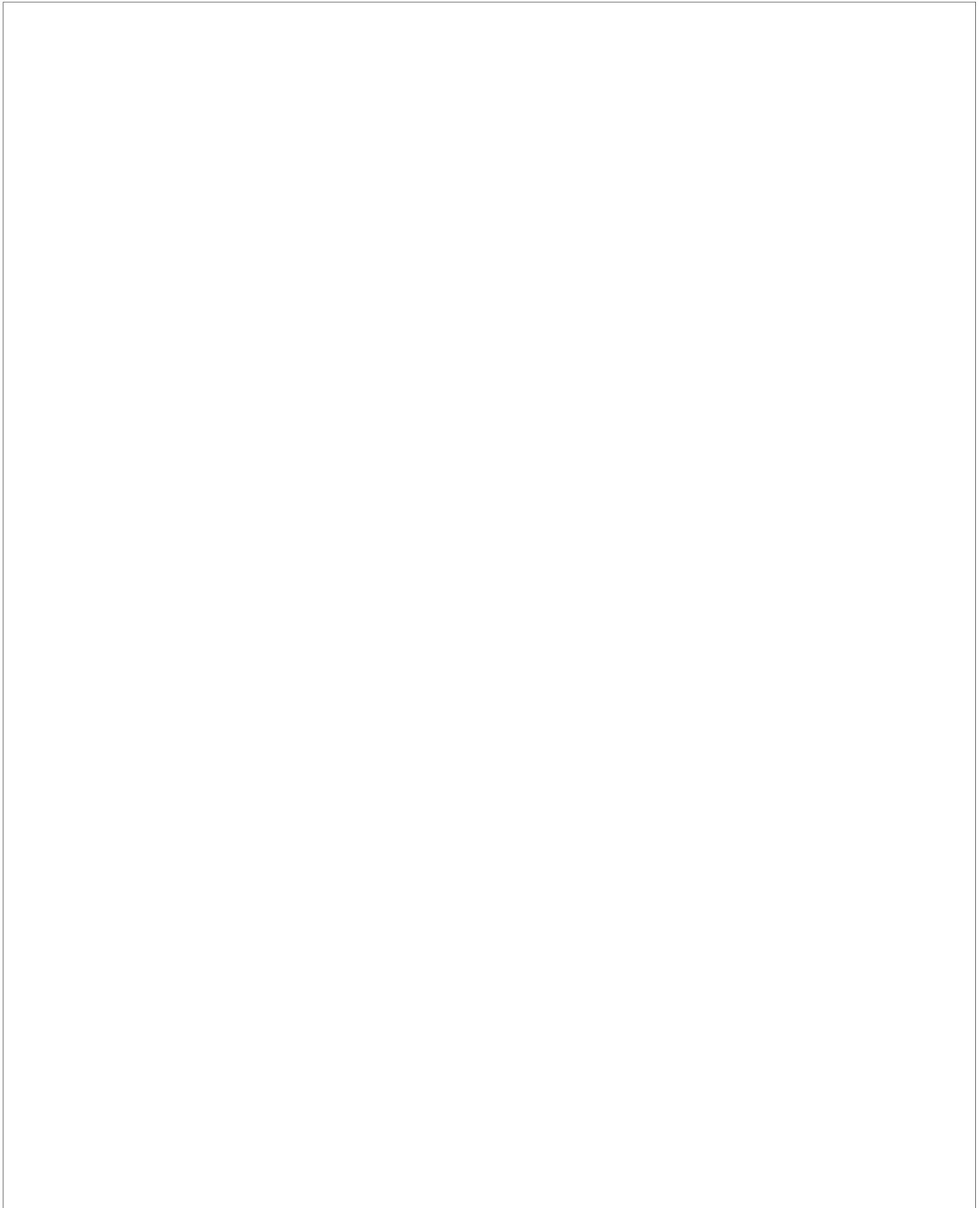
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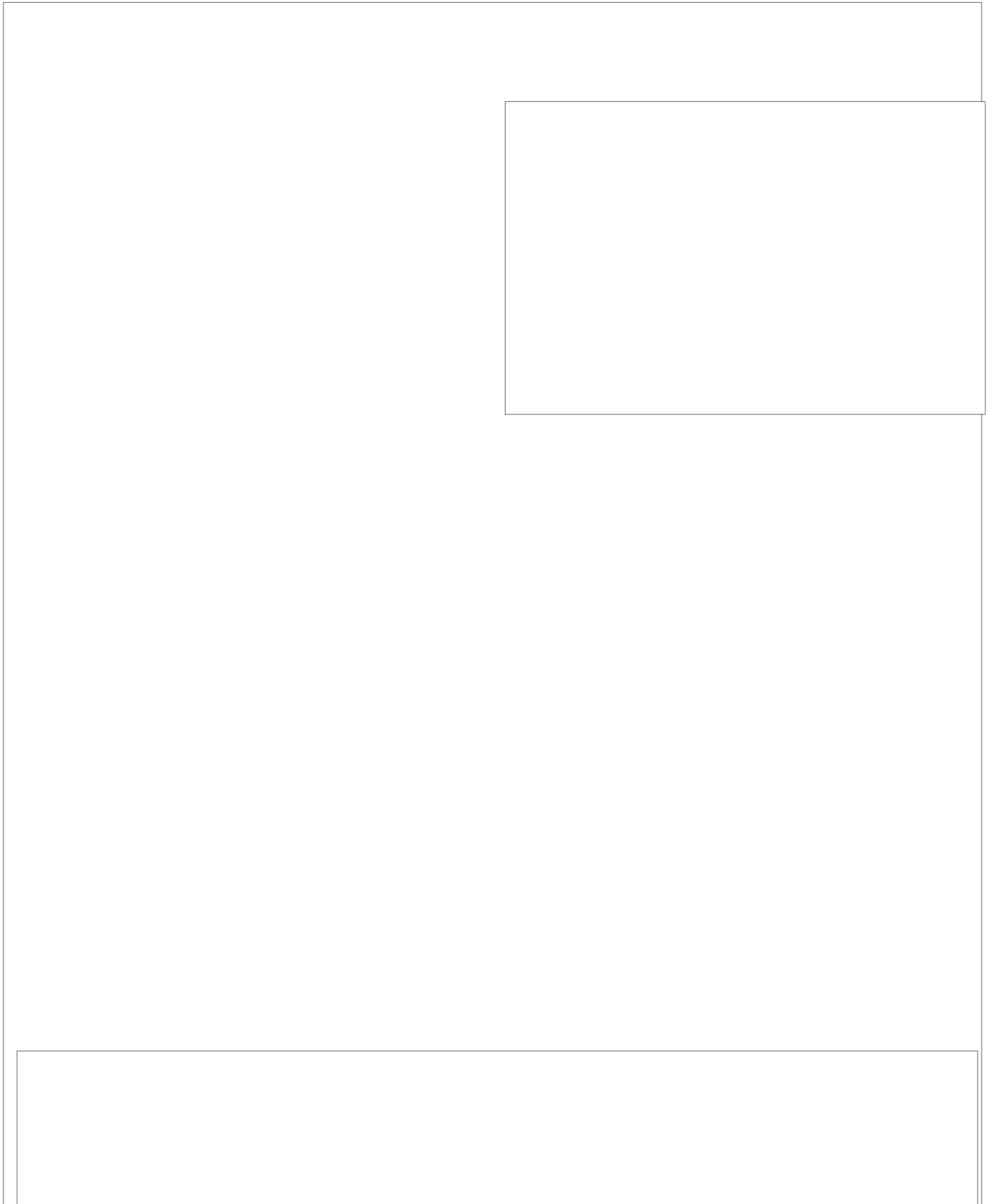
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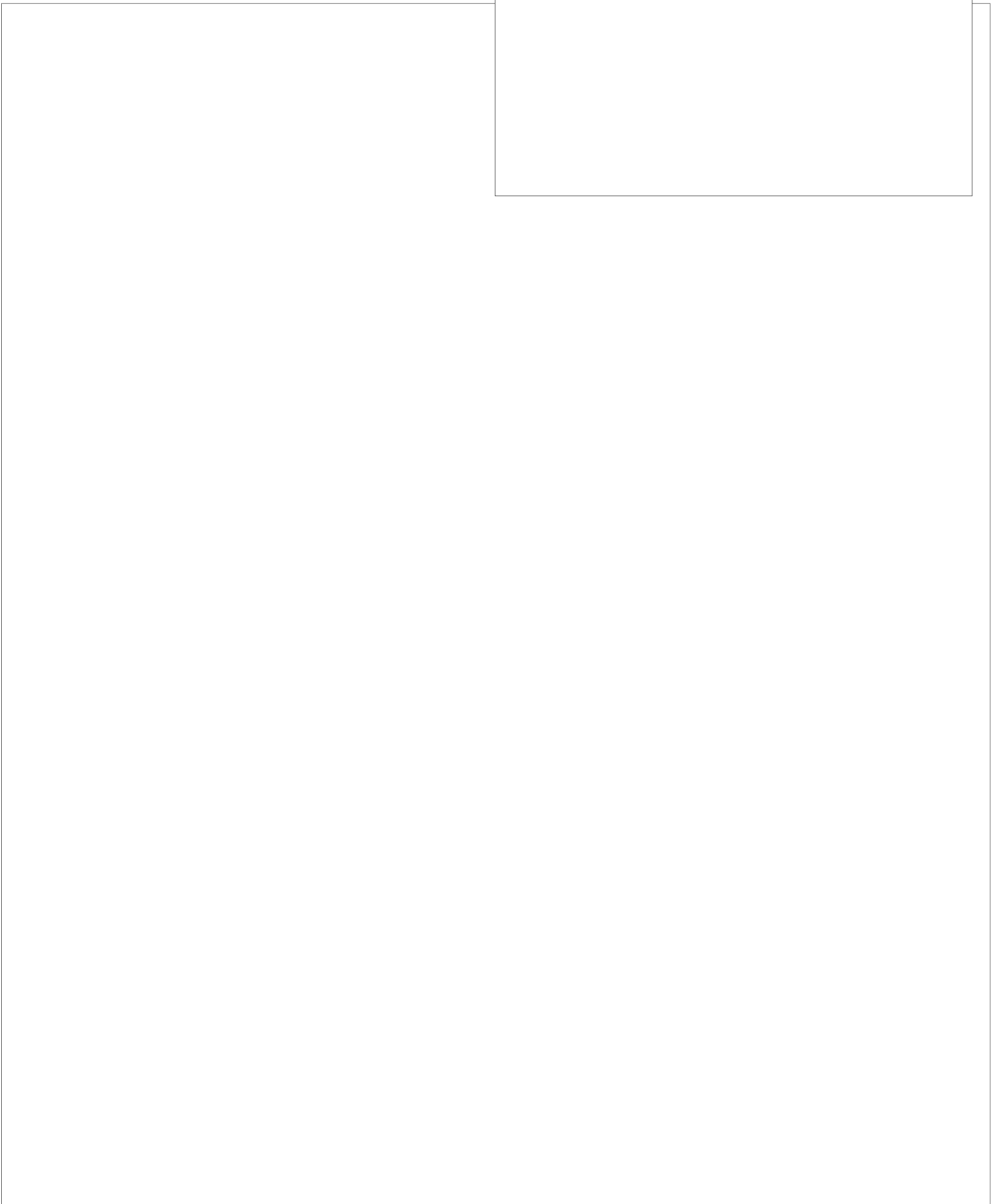
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Phase One of the Funding Flap (U)

McCone inherited a looming disaster—the compromise of CIA's huge covert action funding network—but did little to avert it. Despite clear indications that the Agency's apparatus of legitimate and notional foundations would soon be exposed, he did not pay much attention to the troublesome situation until Rep. Wright Patman's (D-TX) investigation in mid-1964, according to Walter Elder.⁸⁷ Even then, McCone and his deputies did not act decisively enough to protect operations that might have been spared when the New Left publication *Ramparts* broke the story in 1967.



Wright Patman (U)

Photo: Wide World

The DCI's lapse seems startlingly uncharacteristic, given his long record as a successful manager and the importance he placed on scrutinizing CIA's budget. His hesitant and ineffective response to the problem is ascribable to a combination of factors—principally lack of information from subordinates; compartmentation that left Agency compo-

nents not fully cognizant of each other's shortcomings; bureaucratic reluctance to raise difficulties with superiors; previously successful improvisations that lulled program executives into complacency; and the Kennedy administration's desultory interest. ~~XX~~

The funding flap had been years in the making.⁸⁸ To protect the security of some political covert actions, CIA throughout the 1950s built a complex edifice of American agents and proprietary organizations that passed secret subsidies to mostly foreign recipients needing attributable and plausible sources of money.

This system was highly susceptible to compromise. As tax-exempt entities, CIA conduits had to file both private and publicly available records with the Internal Revenue Service, and a number of partial exposures had occurred already. Adding to the network's vulnerability was the fact that several Agency components had responsibility for different aspects of projects paid for through the network.

⁸⁷ Elder, ~~XX~~ DH, 11-12.

⁸⁸ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Warner, *Hearts and Minds*, 47-63, 70-71; ~~XX~~ 1967 *Ramparts* and Associated Exposures," April 1967, 3-8, 11, HS Files, HS/CSG-T206, J05 85-00036K, box 6, folder 165; ~~XX~~ memorandum to Kirkpatrick; ~~XX~~ Church Committee Report, vol. 1, 192; ~~XX~~

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Some senior officials in the new Kennedy administration, particularly in the Department of State and the Bureau of the Budget, worried that a "cultural U-2 incident" might result from the "real hazard" of the increasingly thin cover of the funding network and that important foundations might be embarrassed by disclosure of their CIA ties. These early worries produced no action, however, owing to indifference at the top. The president and the attorney general apparently saw no need to reform the funding of the Agency's CA programs and did not ask then-DCI Allen Dulles to reply substantively to questions about the funding network that Dean Rusk had posed in early 1961. Following the White House's lead, the Special Group declined to impose serious changes on individual CA projects or the scope and emphases of covert action as a whole during an NSC audit in August 1961. Accordingly, when McCone took over as DCI, "higher authority" had not flagged the covert subsidy situation as a serious problem he needed to address.⁸⁹ ~~XX~~

During the next two years, Agency officers jostled over the issue but did not seek resolution at a level high enough to engage the DCI even indirectly.⁹⁰ OGC, Cover and Commercial Staff, and the now reorganized CA Staff exchanged many interoffice communications—the lawyers warning of the danger that official and journalistic probes of American tax-exempt foundations posed to the Agency's covert funding network, the operators giving assurances that they had quietly handled similar problems before and trying to keep OGC out of the day-to-day running of the network. These discussions replicated what had occurred among administration officials: vague high-level concerns eliciting from program managers a combination of nonchalance, bureaucratic defensiveness, and partial solutions to narrowly construed difficulties. ~~XX~~

Compartmentation limited the extent to which Meyer's CA Staff could implement the mandate it received from the new DDP, Richard Helms, to impose tighter controls on the sprawling network. In mid-1962, Helms had ordered the new CA Staff to create a [redacted] to survey all covert actions, amass central data files on projects, and recommend improvements to both operations and overall procedures. Despite this effort, neither [redacted] nor [redacted] would comprehend how vulnerable the Agency was until too late. Making the situation worse was Meyer's failure to indicate to the DDP or DCI, even as late as early 1964, that something was amiss. Despite compartmentation, Meyer knew about security problems from OGC, and he met with McCone regularly about other CA projects. He chose, however, to handle the issue from his limited vantage point, without informing the DCI and top Agency management. Even when McCone dealt with CA funding matters in the cases of [redacted], he did so in response to specific developments and not because he was aware of a larger security problem. ~~XX~~

Accordingly, McCone was incensed when he first heard about the covert funding dilemma on 31 August 1964, when Rep. Patman in open session of Congress identified a cut-out and seven other funding facilities (the so-called "Patman Eight") the Agency used in some CA projects. Patman, who had started investigating one of CIA's foundation cut-outs earlier in the month, had grown dissatisfied with the Agency's lackadaisical responses to earlier, private requests for confidential information. Acting DCI Carter (McCone was on vacation) and senior IRS officials tried to placate Patman, who thought he had been "trifled with," and convinced him not to reveal anything else about the operations. The media already had the main story, however, and McCone first heard about the flap in news reports. At his staff meeting on 1 September, he vented his anger over Patman's revelation and the failure of operations managers to alert him and other senior officers about a controversy that had been building for three weeks. Without naming

⁸⁹ [redacted] "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of Special Group Meeting, 9 February 1961," 9 February 1961, and Bundy memorandum to David Bell (bureau of the Budget), "Questions arising from CIA support of certain activities," NSAM No. 38, 15 April 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 14; Meyer, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting pursuant to NSAM No. 38 re Overt Financial Support for Certain CIA Activities...", 29 June 1961, CCS Files, Job 78-04100R, box 1, folder 1; Meyer, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Bureau of the Budget and State Department Officials on 5 May re NSAM No. 38," 9 May 1961, DDO Files, Job 78-01450R, box 4, folder 9; CA Staff/[redacted] briefing book for PFIAB meeting on 13 April 1967, HS Files, HS/MISC 13.7, especially 61-62, 104, 154, 156; Warner, *Hearst and Minds*, 65-67. ~~XX~~

⁹⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: [redacted]

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CHAPTER 12

names, he declared that "it was inexcusable that a matter this sensitive and which has absorbed the staff since 10 August, was not brought to the attention of higher levels in the Agency until it was too late and the damage had been done." In McCone's mind, his deputies had violated the implied executive contract he made with them: In exchange for receiving substantial administrative independence, they must keep him fully informed of their activities and warn him of potential problems. The scenario must have seemed to McCone like a small-scale repeat of the Cuban missile crisis, when he had also returned from a holiday to find a huge mess, which his subordinates, in his judgment, had mishandled.⁹¹ ~~X~~

Early that afternoon, McCone personally had to explain the debacle to President Johnson, by then already disgruntled with the DCI and the Agency over Vietnam (see Chapter 15). McCone seems to have tried to shift the blame to Patman by stressing the "great damage" that the publicity would produce, rather than to admit that CIA's missteps had caused the difficulty in the first place. When the president asked him what the Agency intended to do, he could only reply rather feebly that "there was little we could do except keep quiet" and find other ways to fund the Agency's covert action clients.⁹² As a hard-driving manager accustomed to working with plans and projections, McCone must have had difficulty admitting to his superior that the organization he had been picked to run effectively had failed at a basic executive responsibility: developing alternatives for administering sensitive programs when they ran into trouble. ~~X~~

McCone immediately put Agency officials to work repairing the damage.⁹³ DDCI Carter unsuccessfully approached

the editor of the *Washington Post* about delaying an editorial criticizing the Agency's use of foundations. Cover Staff stopped using the "Patman Eight" foundations, and Patman was persuaded to rein in an aggressive committee consultant who wanted to investigate all of them. CIA's Legislative Counsel got permission to review and edit the transcripts of the Patman committee's open hearings. McCone told Meyer to prepare a comprehensive study of the CA funding process. The review concluded that sudden shifts in payment mechanisms would cause more problems than they would solve but that minor adjustments should be explored. Meyer also chaired a high-level internal study group that proposed useful procedural fixes but still operated under the tacit premise that future embarrassing leaks, while inevitable, would emerge slowly and sporadically and could be controlled. According to Elder, when McCone told the CA Staff to find another way to finance some of its activities, the officers "saluted loyally...[and] probably gave it an honest try[,] but they simply couldn't find another way to do this." ~~X~~

This disposition against a major overhaul became the consensus within the Agency and the administration. McCone did not reject out of hand Rusk's suggestion in September 1964 that the Agency could handle many so-called covert actions through overt sources such as AID, but other administration principals were inclined to leave well enough alone. After hearing Meyer present his postmortem in late October, some members of the 303 Committee expressed vague unease with CIA's use of foundations for cover, but overall the policymakers agreed that the Agency had no other choice. With minor modifications in train and the Patman investigation under control, the furor over funding subsided during McCone's remaining months as DCI. He took no further interest in it because he was preoccupied

⁹¹ US House of Representatives, *Hearings before Subcommittee No. 1 on Foundations, Select Committee on Small Business, Eighty-Eighth Congress, Second Session...*; "Probe Told CIA Funds Go Through Foundation," *Washington Evening Star*, 31 August 1964; "Patman Says CIA Gave Money to a Foundation in 'Secret' Pact," *New York Times*, 1 September 1964; "Fund Called CIA 'Conduit,'" *Baltimore Sun*, 1 September 1964; and "Hearing Looks Into CIA Role In Tax Probe of Charity Fund," *Washington Post*, 1 September 1964; Intelligence—General clipping file, box 3, HIC; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...A-DCI Meeting with Representatives Patman and Roosevelt—31 August 1964," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 16; Warner ~~_____~~ OH, 32-34; DCI morning meeting minutes for 1 September 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 348; ~~_____~~

warner, *Hearts and Minds*, 66-67. ~~X~~

⁹² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President—1 September 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9. ~~X~~

⁹³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Warner, *Hearts and Minds*, 71-73; ~~_____~~

Carter memorandum about conversation with Alfreid Friendly (*Washington Post*), 2 September 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 16; Warner memorandum about Carter and Warner meeting with Patman and Harry Olsher, 2 October 1964, Political and Psychological Staff Files, Job 68-00608R, box 1, folder 19; ~~_____~~

and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with ~~_____~~ tabs B-D, with attached Meyer memorandum, "Funding Covert Operations," 23 September 1964; Houston memorandum to McCone, "Funding Covert Operations," OGC 64-3887, 14 October 1964, CCS Files, Job 78-04100R, box 1, folder 7; Working Group on Covert Funding, minutes of meetings on 1 and 8 October, 3 and 21 December 1964, *ibid.*, folders 1 and 7; Elder, ~~_____~~ OH, 11-12; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with Secretary Rusk," 1 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; ~~_____~~ Causes and Lessons of February 1967 Ramparts and Associated Exposures," 14; Meyer, "Memorandum for the Record...Appearance Before the 303 Committee," 5 November 1964, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7. For a warning flag that Eastern elite opinion had shifted against the Agency on the funding issue, see the *New York Times* editorial "Misusing C.I.A. Money," 4 September 1964, 28. ~~X~~

McCone and the Secret Wars (I): Espionage and Covert Action (U)

with Vietnam and other issues and was planning to leave Langley anyway. When he resigned, an attitude of quiescence prevailed as the threat of a massive security breach in the subsidy system seemed less likely. Reality would strike hard two years later when *Ramparts* published its exposé. ~~XX~~

McCone as Operations Overseer (U)

Most critics of the Intelligence Community, during McCone's directorship and today, do not question the need for the United States to conduct espionage against foreign adversaries. The usual complaint is that CIA and its counterparts do not collect *enough* foreign secrets—that they do not deploy enough clandestine agents against the right targets and rely excessively on technical collection. Except when intelligence assets are compromised and diplomatic embarrassment results, controversies over HUMINT operations generally are confined to the community and deal mostly with competition for resources and debates over the proper mix of spies and satellites. McCone took part in his share of such discussions, but he left clandestine collection mainly to DDP veterans he believed he could trust. Given his unfamiliarity with field tradecraft, he was wise to do so,

and for the most part, his deputies rewarded his confidence. (U)

Then, as now, covert action was the more problematic activity for the DCI because it crossed the boundary between intelligence activity and foreign policy implementation. Even some experienced intelligence practitioners question whether CA should be the responsibility of an agency whose primary missions are collection and analysis. Involving CIA in political action and paramilitary activities, the argument goes, gives the Agency a stake in policies that inhibits its ability to inform decisionmakers objectively. For McCone, inclined as he was to serve simultaneously as the president's chief intelligence officer and as a foreign policy formulator, that conflict of purpose did not arise. He took seriously his responsibilities as a member of the Special Group/303 Committee, for, also then as now, covert action stood to get CIA—and the DCI—in more difficulty than any other intelligence activity. With the notable exception of the 1964 funding flap, and to the extent that he could influence developments in the CA area, McCone continued the programs he assumed from Allen Dulles, implemented new ones suggested by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and kept the Agency, and himself, out of trouble. ~~XX~~

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McCone and the Secret Wars (II): Counterintelligence and Security (U)

John McCone had more experience in counterintelligence and security when he became DCI than in espionage and covert action. He had overseen the security practices of his shipyards during World War II, and as chairman of the AEC, he was entrusted with protecting some of the country's most sensitive secrets and was familiar with the investigations of Soviet atom spies. This firsthand background with intelligence attacks made McCone very security conscious and, amid the many counterintelligence events of the early 1960s, willing to give the Agency's counterintelligence professionals—especially CI Staff chief James Angleton—a large measure of latitude. McCone respected Angleton's intellect and admired his tenacity, but he did not have a close working relationship with the reclusive and suspicious spy hunter. They met alone only about a dozen times and around 30 times in total during McCone's 41 months at Langley. They apparently never lunched together at Headquarters. Angleton found other ways to engage the DCI more informally—occasionally dropping by McCone's Northwest Washington residence in the early evening.¹

Some journalists have portrayed McCone as beguiled by Angleton, who supposedly took advantage of the DCI's innocence of the secret world to spin captivating theories and pursue shadowy projects. Given McCone's personality and management style, however, he hardly was susceptible to manipulation or willing to tolerate Angleton's supposed "no knock" privilege. Rather, the DCI kept himself informed of, and, as appropriate,



James Angleton (U)

involved himself in, important counterintelligence developments—such as high-level Soviet defections, suspected penetrations of the Intelligence Community, and sensitive liaison relationships. Otherwise, he let Angleton, who reported to Richard Helms, run counterintelligence largely as the two saw fit. In the area of community security, in contrast, McCone was much more engaged. He responded quickly to compromises and instituted procedures to reduce the likelihood of breaches. Like DCIs before and since, however, he could not stop enterprising journalists from gaining access to classified material.²

Penetrations and Deceptions (U)

The extent to which McCone allowed Angleton to shape his perception of counterintelligence affairs was most evident in the case of Anatoliy Golitsyn—a middle-ranking KGB officer who defected to the United States in December 1961. After initially providing a trove of useful intelligence, Golitsyn made sensational allegations about Soviet "moles" and deception and caused years of disarray in several Western services. Golitsyn was the first KGB staff officer to defect to the West since 1954. According to Walter Elder, "Angleton represented [Golitsyn] to McCone as being quite special, and McCone was intensely curious."² At the time he came to the West, Golitsyn claimed his information was too important to tell to any American except the president, the attorney general, and the DCI. Golitsyn's CIA handlers put him off for awhile, but—not assuaged after two meetings with Robert Kennedy and playing on the Agency's fear that he might "go on strike"—he wangled an interview with McCone in July 1962. Golitsyn set the tone for their relationship in his third sentence by complaining that "I had expected that our meeting would take place earlier." The

¹ McCone calendars. Angleton also went on fishing trips with DDCI Carter. Carter untitled memorandum to McCone, 29 April 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 2; author's conversation with Mary Carter O'Connor (Carter's daughter), 4 June 1998.

² Mangold, 56, citing interview with Elder on 26 June 1989. Details about Golitsyn's biography, defection, handling, and allegations are in his operational file [redacted] [Bronson Tweedy], "Anatoliy Mikhaylovich Golitsyn," [redacted] Useful open-source accounts of the case are: Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-War Defectors*, chap. 11; Mangold, chaps. 6–10; Wise, *moynunt*, chap. 3; David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 108–15, 148–50 et seq.; Thomas Powers, "The Riddle Inside the Enigma," *New York Review of Books*, 17 August 1989, reprinted in Powers, *Intelligence Wars*, 109–25; Riebling, chap. 9; Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 177, 184–85, 367–68, 405.

The defection and treatment of KGB officer Yuri Nosenko and the internal "molehunt" that Golitsyn's allegations set off will be discussed respectively in the next two chapters. The Nosenko case is closely related to the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and the large-scale molehunt did not begin until toward the end of McCone's tenure. (U)

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DCI tried to mollify Golitsyn by stressing the importance of his information, soliciting his views on Soviet internal affairs and foreign policy, and assuring him that "[w]e do not want to do anything at all, and will not do anything at all, that will be embarrassing to you or restrictive to you." (McCone noted elsewhere around this time that Golitsyn was "temperamental and difficult to handle and at times resentful of our tactics.") At this first encounter, the defector proposed organizing anti-Soviet counterintelligence and counterpropaganda initiatives with other Western services. McCone was receptive and directed Helms and the CI Staff to work with Golitsyn on developing his project.³ ~~XXXX~~

McCone met with Golitsyn 10 more times—on several occasions alone—during the next 27 months and arranged for Golitsyn to see Robert Kennedy again because, Elder recalled, "[he] was acting like a prima donna and his ego needed soothing." The former KGB officer used some of these meetings to describe Moscow's purported strategic deception program—which included dispatching false defectors to discredit him—and to solicit McCone's support for a \$15 million organization to study the Soviet regime and the KGB. During a luncheon in the DCI's private dining room in mid-December 1962, McCone heard Golitsyn expound his theories that Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy was a myth, that the Soviet Union's purported "splits" with the PRC and Yugoslavia were actually deception operations, and that the Cuban missile crisis was a propaganda ploy. At another meeting in late November 1962, after Golitsyn accused Agency officers of assorted improprieties toward him, McCone "stood up to him somewhat angrily and demanded proof," which the defector never provided.⁴ ~~XXXX~~

McCone and Golitsyn's CIA and FBI handlers put up with the defector's arrogance and irascibility for a time, because he appeared to provide sensitive information corroborating previous reporting and leads to other potential sources.⁵ Elder has characterized the thinking of McCone, Helms, Angleton, and the management of the DDP's SR Division at the time: "Golitsyn was threatening to go out in the world on his own. We felt he was the best defector we ever had. His *potential* was at least the best.... Besides, no one put the case to McCone that he should *not* see Golitsyn." Even a critical study prepared by the post-Angleton CI Staff in 1976 described Golitsyn's substantiated intelligence as "a tremendous collection...[with] invaluable insights...some of it was highly significant."⁶

⁶ Golitsyn's reporting, extensive in its own right, soared in value in the absence of other comparable HUMINT.

³ "Golitsyn," 20; [redacted] memorandum to [redacted] 13 July 1963, Golitsyn [redacted] McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Discussion with the Attorney General...27 December 1961," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 1; transcript of McCone meeting with Golitsyn and Helms, 9 July 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 34. Golitsyn saw the attorney general again in November 1962 because he was dissatisfied with his dealings with McCone. The DCI thought Golitsyn might settle down if he met with the FBI but could not convince J. Edgar Hoover to see him. The FBI chief refused to violate his personal policy of not meeting with defectors, agents, or criminals and believed Golitsyn wanted an interview "simply on the basis of ego." Helms, speaking for the DCI to the FBI liaison to CIA, Samuel Papich, noted that the attorney general had said "one should play up to the ego of an individual such as [Golitsyn]," but Papich (and Hoover) were unmoved. In February 1965, Bureau counterintelligence officials reported to Hoover that Golitsyn was too caught up in his theories to be trusted, and may even be a fabricator. In July 1965, Hoover ordered all official Bureau contact with the defector to cease. Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Mr. Hoover and [redacted]" 16 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Hoover letter to Helms, 6 October 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 1, folder 19; Mangold, 26, 67 citing interviews with Elder on 11 August 1988 and 26 June 1989; "Golitsyn," 32, 58. The Agency clarified policies in defector handling and instituted some new ones as a result of problems with Golitsyn. Karamessines memoranda to Carter, "General Policy of Defector Handling" and "Special Handling of Defectors Whose Information is Predominately CI in Nature," 7 June 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 4. McCone was more directly involved when USIB made further modifications regarding treatment of defectors from hostile services after irregularities arose with handling Golitsyn's "nemesis," Yuri Nosenko, in 1964.

⁴ Mangold, 67 citing interview with Elder on 11 August 1988; McCone calendars for 1962-64; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Conversation," 17 December 1962, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; "Golitsyn," 26; [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Interrogation of Soviet Defector—[redacted]" 14 December 1962, with attachment [redacted] (OIG) memorandum, "IG Interrogation—[redacted]" 11 December 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676K, box 19, folder 2. ~~XXXX~~

⁵ According to documents smuggled out of the former Soviet Union by ex-KGB archivist Vasili Mitrokhin, the KGB thought Golitsyn's defection was extremely damaging, forcing it to suspend dozens of operational contacts. The service put Golitsyn's name on its "hit list" of traitors. Andrew and Mitrokhin, 184-85, 367. (U)

⁶ GRU officer Oleg Penkovskiy was still in place, but he reported mostly on Soviet strategic and military subjects. (U)

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McCone and the DDP also used Golitsyn as an analytical resource on the Soviet Union during and after the Cuban missile crisis. In October 1962, the CI Staff had Golitsyn assess probable

Soviet reaction to President Kennedy's speech imposing a quarantine on Cuba. Golitsyn thought Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev would go to the brink but then step back, knowing he could not win concessions in Berlin without a war he was not prepared to start. In mid-January 1963, the DCI asked Golitsyn to evaluate Moscow's apparent failure to anticipate Washington's reaction to the deployment of offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba. Golitsyn presented his views in a hastily arranged interview with the CI Staff's chief analyst, Raymond Rocca. He judged that the Soviet maneuver was political, not military; Khrushchev had intended to force the West to negotiate over Berlin and other issues and to sow dissension among Western allies. According to Golitsyn, the Soviets had calculated all along that eventually they would have to remove the missiles, but they were willing to pay that price to make diplomatic gains. They did, however, misjudge how fast and how far the confrontation would escalate. Golitsyn's assessment tracked generally with McCone's and probably enhanced his credibility with the DCI.⁷ X

By early 1963, however, McCone's curiosity about Golitsyn was satisfied, at least temporarily, and officers in SR Division—already weary of Golitsyn's incessant and increasing demands—had concluded that he had nothing else useful to offer. He had passed on almost all of his firsthand knowledge, and he now purveyed new information largely from "analysis" of operational material US and for-

eign services gave him. ADDP Thomas Karamessines went so far as to write that "there is no question...that we allowed the defector to blackmail us into control...no defector, irrespective of his value, should be allowed to place us in that position." Except for Angleton and the CI Staff, there was little resistance at Langley when Golitsyn accepted an invitation from Britain's MI-5 to help it hunt Soviet agents in

London. Golitsyn had wanted to move to the United Kingdom for several months, having, according to Elder, "realized he had run out of credit here. Furthermore, he realized we were not going to bankroll his \$15 million project to bring down the Communist Party of the USSR." After querying the British, McCone approved the relocation. Angleton wanted Golitsyn back, however, and may have contrived (through a leak to a British tabloid) to force him out of England. After Golitsyn returned to the United States in August, McCone and Helms accepted Angleton's unprecedented proposal to take on the defector as a counterintelligence adviser completely under CI Staff control. McCone appeared to agree with Helms that this troublesome and seemingly intractable case—which still seemed to have potential counterespionage benefits—would be best handled outside SR Division lest it disrupt regular espionage operations.⁸ X

Golitsyn soon was back in McCone's office elaborating on the Soviet "master plan": the Sino-Soviet split was bogus, concocted by Moscow; the KGB had penetrated the Agency's Soviet division (with an agent codenamed "Sasha");

McCone sent an urgent "EYES ONLY" cable to asking him to

⁷ "Golitsyn," 55; Mangold, 56 citing interview with Elder on 26 June 1989; McCone, "Memorandum on Counterintelligence Activities," 20 July 1962, and Angleton, "Highlights of Counterintelligence Information Obtained from Anatoliy Mikhaylovich GOLITZYN," 18 July 1962, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 24; (SR Division) untitled memorandum to Helms on Golitsyn and Nosenko cases, December 1965, 9, DDO Files, Job 89-00395R, box 4, folder 75. X

⁸ Karamessines memorandum to Carter, "Reactions to President Kennedy's Speech and Comments on Cuban Crisis by Soviet State Security Defector Anatoliy Mikhailovich Golitsyn," 24 October 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 1, folder 15; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Soviet Estimate of U.S. Reactions on Cuba" with attachments, *ibid.*, Job 78-02958R, box 1, folder 16. It is not known if Golitsyn tailored his conclusions to impress McCone. He might have heard that administration officials were carping at McCone for proving them wrong about the missile deployment, and, with his characteristic penchant for manipulation and self-promotion, he could have seen an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the DCI. X

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respond to each of the allegations. [] later paraphrased his reply as, "No. No. No. No. And no." With those assurances, the DCI did not follow up on Golitsyn's claims.¹⁰ ~~XX~~

⁹ "Golitsyn," 26, 28–29, 31, 58–59; [] "History of CI Staff," 64–68; Karamessines memorandum to CI Staff, "The Damage Report on the Felfe Case, and Lessons for the Future," 8 February 1963, DDC Files, lob 78-02958R, box 1, folder 22; Mangold, 68–81, quote from interview with Elder on 26 June 1989; [] Nigel West, *The Circus: MI5 Operations, 1945–1972*, 83, 85, 112–14. Because Golitsyn provided intelligence about a number of countries, before this time SI and WE Divisions and the CI Staff handled him jointly. Golitsyn had patrons [] but his information did not prove very useful to them in the long run. No foreign spy in either British service not previously known to them was uncovered as a result of Golitsyn's information. "Golitsyn," 77; Michael Smith, *New Clout, Old Dagger*, 68–69; West, chap. 5 passim. The disarray within the British secret services that Golitsyn contributed to is described in Tom Bower, *The Perfect English Spy*, chap. 12, and West, chaps. 7–9. ~~XX~~

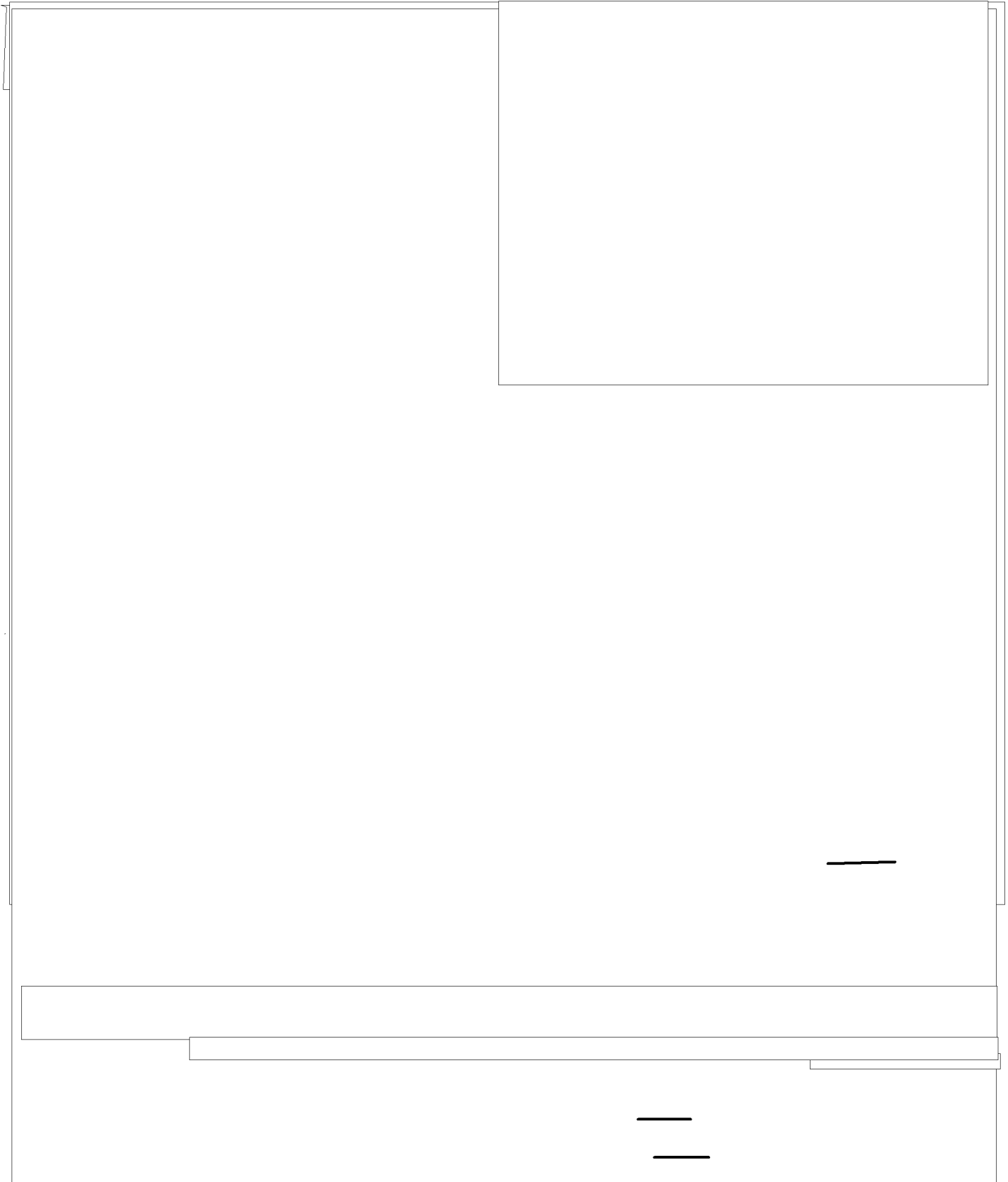
¹⁰ "Golitsyn," 31, 35–36; memorandum on McCone-Golitsyn meetings on 23 August and 4 September 1963, Golitsyn [] "History of CI Staff," 178–[] Mangold, 86 citing interview [] on 15 May 1989. Golitsyn also met with Attorney General Kennedy—for the last time—to detail his theories. ~~XX~~

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McCone and the Secret Wars (II): Counterintelligence and Security (U)

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secretary of state for war, John Profumo; a Soviet naval attaché and GRU officer, Yevgeny Ivanov; and a teenage English prostitute, Christine Keeler, who was servicing both men. Publicity about Profumo's infatuation with Keeler broke in October 1962, when she sold her story to a London tabloid. Profumo disputed everything she said about their relationship and tried to suppress news coverage. His denial of impropriety to the House of Commons in March 1963 soon was shown to be false, causing a public furor over possible breaches of security. In early June, Profumo admitted to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that he had lied. He then resigned from the Cabinet. Macmillan—whose government had already been shaken by several other counterintelligence contretemps and had reached its nadir of public support—convened an official inquiry, which concluded that the Profumo-Keeler-Ivanov link had not damaged British national security.²¹ McCone later agreed with a British official's characterization of the affair as "more of a bedroom farce [than] serious espionage." At the time, however, the DCI declared that "this matter [is] of great concern to highest authority," and Walter Elder said it caused "great excitement" at Langley and the White House. As it unfolded, the scandal revealed deep anxiety about its potential for compromising secrets and embarrassing the Kennedy administration.²² ~~SECRET~~

White House Damage Control: The Profumo Affair (U)

McCone—evidently for reasons of national security, diplomacy, domestic politics, and friendship with the Kennedys—took what [redacted] later described as an "inordinate interest" in a foreign sex and espionage scandal that brought down a British government. The principals in the episode were the British

Three US angles to the Profumo Affair—US-UK diplomatic relations, possible compromises of US intelligence secrets, and some of John Kennedy's private indiscretions before he was elected president—explain McCone's "inordinate interest" in the scandal and his participation in

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high-level meetings with FBI and Department of Defense and Department of State officials about it in mid-June 1963.²³ The diplomatic context in which the episode unfolded was the so-called "special relationship" Kennedy and Macmillan enjoyed as leaders of the Atlantic community and the two most powerful countries in NATO. In keeping with the president's interest in affirming and protecting that political bond, McCone would have wanted to discover anything that might weaken or discredit it.

The first concerned fleeting and innocuous contact between one of Keeler's friends and ambassadors David Bruce and Charles Bohlen at a high-society function to which all had been invited. Kennedy apparently already knew about the incident, probably from Bruce, and seemed unconcerned.

²¹ Giglio, 268; Parmet, 115–16; Anthony Summers and Stephen Dorril, *Honeytrap*, 121 et seq.; Philip Knightley, *An Affair of State*; Anthony Summers, *Official and Confidential*, 305–9; Alistair Horne, *Harold Macmillan. Volume II: 1957–1986*, 471–97. The extent of Macmillan's political disgrace is trenchantly summarized in a telegram from Ambassador David Bruce to the president and secretary of state; see *FRUS, 1961–1963, XIII, Western Europe and Canada*, 1132–34. The scandal's impact on British-Soviet relations, and Ivanov's role as a disinformation agent during the Cuban missile crisis, are summarized in Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 102–12.

Ivanov's own account, portraying himself as a brilliantly successful operator who ensnared Profumo and tried to blackmail the Royal Family, is *The Naked Spy*. Keeler gives her version in the pulpish *Scandal* and the more thoughtful *The Truth At Last: My Story*. Some British intelligence officials thought the whole business was a Soviet political action operation designed to discredit their government and did not take the espionage element too seriously.

The other counterintelligence episodes that damaged Macmillan's reputation included Soviet penetrations of the Admiralty, the conviction of George Blake in 1961, and the defection of Harold "Kim" Philby in 1963. Conon Molody (alias Gordon Lonsdale) was a Soviet illegal who ran the Portland spy ring, so named because it collected secrets from the Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland, England. The ring's members included Morris and Helen Cohen (alias Peter and Helen Kroger), who were Soviet atomic spies in the United States until 1950. They fled the country the day Julius Rosenberg was arrested and arrived in England in 1954. Molody and the Cohens were convicted in March 1961. William John Vassall, a clerk in the Admiralty, stole secrets for the Soviets until his arrest in September 1962. He was sentenced the same day that President Kennedy announced the Cuban missile crisis. Philby and Blake are too well known to require discussion here. All the above cases are conveniently summarized in Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Spy Book: The Encyclopedia of Espionage*, 72–73, 128–29, 341, 433–36, 446, 574. The discomfiture they caused the Macmillan government is well described in Horne, 456–67. (U)

Summers and Dorril, 251, 254; Knightley, 205–6. Benjamin Bradlee, editor of the *Washington Post* and a Kennedy confidante, said the president "devoured every word written about the Profumo case" and "ordered all further cables from Bruce on that subject sent to him immediately." Bradlee, 230.

²³ McCone calendars, entries for 19–21 June 1963; Alan Belmont memoranda to Clyde Tolson (both FBI) about McCone meetings with McNamara and DIA director Joseph Carroll on 20 June 1963, FBI Freedom of Information Act file on Profumo, No. 65-68218, on FBI Web site at www.foia.fbi.gov/bowtie. (BOWTIE was the FBI's codename for Profumo.) There is no record in McCone's papers about his meeting on 20 June with McNamara and Hoover—the only time he ever met with them together.

²⁴ Gene Grove, "Outcry Grows; Queen Won't See Profumo," *New York Post*, 7 June 1963, Profumo clipping file, HIC; Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, *Lust of Knowing: Memoirs of an Intelligence Officer*, 469–70; Knightley, 205–6. Archibald Roosevelt, *For*

²⁵ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Brief Meeting with the President...21 June 1963," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President, Secretary McNamara, General McKee (USAF)...," 19 June 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 4; Elder memorandum to Bundy, "Ward-Keeler Case," 21 June 1963, with attachment, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 5; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 21 October 1963; Summers and Dorril, 247–49, 251; Roosevelt, 469–70; Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*.

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The timing of the possible Air Force security breach helps explain some of the worry it caused in Washington. The early 1960s were proving to be one of the worst periods in Western counterintelligence history, with numerous incidents indicating serious problems inside several services: the defections of three NSA officers to the Soviet Union in 1960; the arrests of George Blake, the Portland spy ring, and John Vassall in Britain during 1961–62; the discovery of Soviet penetrations of the West German intelligence service in 1962 and the Swedish military in 1963; the arrest of a US Navy yeoman, attached to the US Navy headquarters in London with top secret and special NATO clearances, in September 1962 for spying for the GRU; “Kim” Philby’s defection to Moscow in January 1963; the indictment of a Soviet spy ring in July 1963 in New York on charges of stealing US military secrets; and the investigation of Sgt. Jack Dunlap, an NSA courier and probable GRU penetration at Ft. Meade. This succession of cases prompted several official inquiries into the US Intelligence Community’s security practices and heightened the administration’s and the DCI’s wariness about further incidents.²⁷ X

President Kennedy’s reputed personal connection to the Profumo affair became a potentially messy diplomatic and public relations issue for the administration—and, it appears, for McCone, whose role as the president’s chief intelligence officer now took on an unprecedented aspect. The scandal broke in the United States just as the administration was showcasing the Anglo-American relationship.

The *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Washington Post* mistakenly reported that US intelligence services had uncovered Profumo’s indiscretion and tipped off their British counterparts. Second, and far worse from the White House’s perspective, the *New York Journal-American* claimed that one of “the biggest names in American politics” who held “a very high elective office” had been involved with the Keeler ring.²⁸ The White House was alarmed because just before and after the 1960 presidential election, John Kennedy allegedly had had assignations with one or two of Keeler’s friends. The administration—not to mention Her Majesty’s Government—would be humiliated if news of the president’s purported encounters with some of the same women in Britain’s sex-for-secrets imbroglio appeared just after he made a state visit there. In late June, Robert Kennedy summoned the *Journal-American* reporters to his office to confirm that they were referring to his brother during the 1960 campaign and pre-inaugural period, and to demand that they reveal their sources. They refused. Soon after, the attorney general threatened the paper with an antitrust suit, and it dropped its coverage of the affair.²⁹ X

Given McCone’s friendship with Robert Kennedy—the chief protector of the president’s reputation—and his responsibility as DCI for assessing the security damage of the Profumo episode, it seems likely that McCone knew the truth about John Kennedy’s past link to the Keeler circle, used CIA resources to find out what the [] and the FBI had uncovered about it, and passed on what he learned [] to the attorney general. President Kennedy’s reckless encounters with women of dubious note—a Mafia moll (Judith Exner) and a suspected East German agent (Ellen Rometsch), among others—were widely known in official and unofficial Washington at the time and already had caused difficulties for the administration. With McCone’s official duties and his intimate connections to the

²⁷ At a meeting with McCone, Gen. Carroll, and Alan Belmont of the FBI on 20 June 1963, McNamara “said he felt like he was sitting on a bomb in this matter as he could not tell what would come out of it.” The airmen told Air Force investigators that they had met Keeler in nightclubs but were not sexually involved with her or any of her friends. The airmen eventually were cleared. D.J. Brennan memoranda to William Sullivan (both FBI), 20 and 26 June 1963, Belmont memorandum to Tolson, 20 June 1963, and Hoover memorandum to Tolson et al., 27 June 1963, FBI Profumo FOIA file. The three NSA defectors were Bernon Mitchell, William Martin, and Victor Hamilton. The Navy yeoman was Nelson Drummond, who was convicted in August 1963. The Swedish military officer was air attaché Stig Wennerstrom, posted to Washington. Dunlap committed suicide before he was charged with espionage. Polmar and Allen, 176, 179, 356, 372, 592; Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, 177–200; Lawrence P. Jenson II, *The Espionage Threat*, DOS-2400-219-88, 17–18. A contemporary look at some of these counterintelligence incidents was given in “Who’s Spying for Whom? World Puzzle and a Shake-up,” *US News and World Report*, 29 July 1963, Intelligence—General clipping file, box 3, HIC. X

²⁸ Some observers speculated at the time that the FBI may have been the source of the *Journal-American* story on 29 June 1963 by James Horan and Dom Fraser, “High U.S. Aide Implicated in V-Girl Scandal.” That Hearst-owned newspaper was stridently conservative and anti-Kennedy, had ties to the FBI dating to the McCarthy era, and had run stories on the British side of the scandal. (U)

²⁹ Giglio, 268–69; Parmet, 115–16; Hilty, 251–52; Hersh, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, 392–93; Knightley, 206; Summers and Dorril, 67–70, 196–204; Thomas, *Robert Kennedy*, 254; Stanley Grogan (OPA) untitled memorandum to Helms, 7 June 1963, DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 2, folder 16. Kennedy met with Macmillan the second week of June; the *Journal-American* story ran on the 29th. X

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Gole-
newski was one of the West's most valuable CI sources dur-
ing the Cold War, but his role as a useful asset ended when
he became mentally deranged. He was a Polish intelligence
officer who worked as a KGB mole in his own service.

Soon after, Goleniewski's story appeared in the press, with the *New York Journal-American* taking the lead in publicizing "what looms as a greater scandal than the famous Alger Hiss case." Goleniewski made sensational public charges about KGB penetrations of the US government: at least 19 employees were Soviet spies, including four at CIA, a dozen at the Department of State (most posted to the embassy in Warsaw), and three scientists working on classified projects; the Agency had lost more than \$1 million in

Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, 95–99, 103–6. Goleniewski's version appears in Guy Richards, *Imperial Agent: The Goleniewski-Romanov Case*. Walter Phorzheimer, curator of the HIC, summarized the book in a memorandum to senior Agency managers, "New Book: *Imperial Agent: The Goleniewski-Romanov Case* by Guy Richards," 10 November 1966, MORI doc no. 297931. ¹⁸

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operational funds in Vienna that wound up in the hands of communist organizations; and lax security practices guaranteed that more enemy agents remained undiscovered. This counterintelligence *cause célèbre* caught the attention of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. The latter subpoenaed Goleniewski, but he refused to appear, pleading illness. (He later accused CIA of preventing him from testifying by keeping him under detention in a New York safehouse.) The defector's story was widely reported and prompted many editorials urging the US government to tighten security. A vituperative anticommunist member of the House Un-American Affairs Committee, John Ashbrook (R-OH), took to the floor to denounce the government for harboring subversives and covering up Soviet espionage in the United States. An eight-year-old list of over 800 security risks at the Department of State was retrieved from the files and resulted in a number of personnel investigations there and the recall of several employees from Warsaw.³³ ~~SECRET~~

Amid this public row, the Agency's relationship with Goleniewski degenerated further, as did his mental condition. The defector berated CIA to his FBI contacts, spurned the ministrations of DDP officer George Kisevalter (perhaps the Agency's most experienced handler of defectors), and pressured CIA to restore his contract by threatening legal action and full disclosure. He went ahead and told his tale on a radio talk show in New York and cooperated with a headline-seeking book project on the Romanov mystery written by the *Journal-American* reporter responsible for the outlandish stories published so far.³⁴ ~~SECRET~~

McCone first got involved in Goleniewski's case in mid-1963 when he approved a special financial and security arrangement—much of it already set in place—and Agency sponsorship of a private congressional bill to grant citizenship to Goleniewski. The defector had written to McCone in April complaining about his treatment and threatening to tell the White House about his situation. The DCI spoke to Goleniewski, whom he regarded as a “psychopathic case,”

but he thought the Agency should take extra measures to ensure the defector's physical and financial security in recognition of his past value as a counterintelligence source. McCone also had to assuage the irate chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, Michael Feighan (D-OH), who was sponsoring the citizenship bill without knowing either all the details of the case or the Agency's procedures for dealing with private legislation for defectors. The DCI and other CIA officers persuaded Feighan to encourage Goleniewski to be more cooperative. That approach did not work. Goleniewski went public several months later, and the congressman took his side in the dispute, at least until the Romanov fantasy eclipsed the CI aspect.³⁵ ~~SECRET~~

As the situation unfolded, McCone kept the White House, Congress, and USIB informed, and oversaw how Carter, Helms, and General Counsel Lawrence Houston managed the increasingly difficult case. A new CIA angle briefly arose in January 1965 when ~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ Herman Kimsey, publicly contended that the Agency possessed finger and sole prints and dental charts that corroborated Goleniewski's claim to royal lineage. McCone also had to deal with some residual antipathy from the FBI, which CIA had kept out of the Goleniewski case until after the Pole arrived in the West. One unexpected benefit from the problems with Goleniewski was a series of improvements in the Agency's defector handling procedures.³⁶ ~~SECRET~~

Overall, McCone and his deputies made the best of a bizarre situation that was imploding at the same time CIA had to cope with unprecedented public and media criticism and the DCI's relations with the White House were growing more tenuous (see Chapter 15). By placating a recalcitrant asset, keeping members of the Intelligence Community apprised of the case's problems, and anticipating the consequences of adverse publicity, McCone and CIA executives minimized political damage to the Agency while enabling

³³ Besides the sources cited above, see also the many news articles in the Goleniewski clipping file, HIC. The tone of the *Journal-American* stories is conveyed in these representatively lurid headlines: “US Secret Agencies Penetrated by Reds”; “4 US Envoys Linked to Red Spy Sex Net”; “CIA Hiding Red Defector From Probers”; and “Where Reds Put Spies” (2–5 March 1964). The source of these reports is unknown, but the Agency's IG attributed the leak to “congressional circles.” “Goleniewski Case,” 18. ~~SECRET~~

³⁴ David Wise, “HR 5507, a Prize Defector, Now the Boomerang,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 8 March 1964, and transcripts of Guy Richards and Goleniewski interviews on Barry Farber talk show on WOR Radio, New York, 30 March and 10 August 1964, Goleniewski clipping file, HIC. (U)

³⁵ “Goleniewski Case,” 13; ~~SECRET~~ memorandum to McCone, “Background Material on ~~SECRET~~ for Meeting with Representative Michael A. Feighan...,” 12 August 1963, DDO Files, JDD 78-02958R, box 1, folder 8; transcript of McCone meeting with reignan, Murphy, and others, 23 August 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 5; H.R. 5507, Private Law 88–59, “An Act for the Relief of Michal Goleniewski,” 28 August 1963, *Congressional Record—House*, 3 March 1964, 4113. ~~SECRET~~

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CHAPTER 13

US and Western services to exploit Goleniewski's knowledge effectively. (U)

Persistent Suspicions about Francis Gary Powers (U)

McCone undertook a vigorous—perhaps heavy-handed—inquiry into the U-2 incident involving Francis Gary Powers immediately after the Soviets released the captured pilot in a prisoner exchange in February 1962.³⁷ McCone believed that more lay behind the shootdown in May 1960 than either Powers would admit or most technical evidence indicated. Personal and patriotic sentiments, institutional interests, and security concerns motivated McCone's energetic quest for an answer, and, when one he deemed satisfactory was not forthcoming, they drove his vindictive actions against the pilot. ~~XX~~



Francis Gary Powers on trial in Moscow in 1960 (U)

Influencing McCone's aversion to Powers was his knowledge that some senior Agency and community officials had

always doubted Powers's story. Just after the incident, CIA officers told journalists that Soviet antiaircraft missiles could not reach as high as the Kremlin claimed they had and that the plane had suffered a flameout or other malfunction that caused it to drop within range of Soviet air defenses and fighters. Then-DCI Allen Dulles gave that evaluation to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 31 May 1960 and the following month to C.L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, who noted in his diary that

Dulles is sure Gary Powers was not shot down at normal altitude (about 70,000 feet). The U-2, when it reaches rarefied altitudes, tends to get a flameout. We think Powers glided down to try and restart his motor. He was then shot down around 30,000–40,000 feet. Present Soviet defenses don't go above 60,000 feet. We think Powers parachuted.

According to a secret Department of State report in June 1960, the U-2 debris displayed in Moscow's Gorky Park was in much better condition than would have been expected had it been damaged by a missile and then plunged nearly 13 miles to earth.

~~XX~~ In October 1960, the FBI began a full investigation of Powers and his family, exchanging information with CIA well into 1961. The Bureau's conclusion about Powers's loyalty was redacted from documents released in his FBI FOIA file, but McCone would have been privy at least to the content of the unexpurgated originals. Other information in Powers's file indicates that the Bureau remained suspicious toward him.³⁸ ~~XX~~

³⁶ Helms memorandum to Carter, "Inspector General's Review of the Handling of the Defector Michal GOLENIEWSKI," 11 June 1964, and ~~XX~~ memorandum to Carter, "Possible Publication of Mr. Guy Richards' Book Entitled 'The Goleniewski Story,'" 24 August 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 9, folder 202; "Ex-CIA Official Claims Polish Defector to Be Son of the Last Czar," *Washington Daily News*, 19 January 1965, and "Defected Polish Spy Can Prove He Is Son of Czar, Ex-CIA Man Says," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 January 1965, Goleniewski clipping file, HIC. The Agency terminated Goleniewski's contract in late 1965 but continued to pay him a small annuity. ~~XX~~ memorandum to Helms, 13 December 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 9, folder 202; ~~XX~~ memorandum to Raborn, ~~XX~~ Michal N. Goleniewski, "6 September 1965, appendix to ~~XX~~ 'Poland: External Operations, vol. 2. Goleniewski persisted with his Romanov claims until he died in 1993. Guy Richards took up the search for the missing *tsarevitch* and had two books about it published in the 1970s, *The Hunt for the Czar* and *The Rescue of the Romanovs*. Recent investigations have thoroughly discredited Goleniewski's contention. William Clarke, *The Lost Fortune of the Czars*, chap. 10. ~~XX~~

³⁷ The exchange of Powers for Soviet spy Rudolph Abel, conducted in Berlin on 10 February 1962, was almost fully negotiated before McCone became DCI, and he did not express an opinion on it. ~~XX~~

³⁸ CIA memorandum, "Operational Hypothesis of Events of Downed U2C Aircraft," 26 May 1960 (marked "Coordinated with USAF"), HS Files, Job 90T00782R, box 1, folder 3; "Statement by Mr. Allen W. Dulles... to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 31 May 1960," 12, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 7; Michael R. Beschloss, *Mayday: The U-2 Affair*, 355–56, 359; Riebling, 155–58; ~~XX~~ JOC Files, Job 86-00168R, box 3, folders 1944–45, and Job 82-00451R, box 4, folders 162–64; Powers's FBI FOIA file No. 105-87346, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 8, folder 9; Pocock, *Dragon Lady*, 50–51. Intelligence from Oleg Penkovskiy apparently did not factor into McCone's thinking about Powers. The defector's account of the shootdown, included in the first material he gave the Agency in 1960, did not specify the altitude of Powers's U-2 when it was hit. Schecter and Deriabin, 6–7, 118–19; Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers*, 355–57; ~~XX~~

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So did many Americans. Instead of returning home to a hero's welcome, Powers faced a barrage of criticism. *Newsday* asked whether he was "A HERO OR A MAN WHO FAILED HIS MISSION?" A US senator said "I wish that this pilot who was being paid thirty thousand dollars a year had shown only ten percent of the spirit and courage of Nathan Hale." An American Legion official called Powers "a cowardly American who evidently valued his own skin far more than the welfare of the nation that was paying him so handsomely." The president of the Fund for the Republic opened a study of the decline of character in the United States by asking, "Should we be alarmed by the difference between the behavior of Airman Powers and of Nathan Hale?"³⁹ (U)

McCone, sternly moralistic and patriotic, shared these sentiments and must have found Powers's public apology at his trial—"I am deeply repentant and profoundly sorry"—especially hard to take.⁴⁰ The widely published photograph of Powers with his head slumped to his chest, probably taken during a moment of fatigue and despondency, nevertheless was seen by many Americans as a symbol of craven collaboration and no doubt set badly with the DCI. Beyond his personal feelings, McCone may have sensed that the Agency's reputation might suffer if he did not try to make Powers pay a price for seeming to cooperate with the enemy. He may also have wanted to deter other reconnaissance flyers from placing survival over national security and giving the Soviet Union more propaganda victories. (U)

Unresolved counterintelligence and security questions added to McCone's animus toward Powers. Since mid-1960, both CIA and the FBI had investigated leads and theories to explain the loss of Powers's U-2. These included a break in communications security that could have allowed the Soviets to monitor transmissions between pilots and the U-2 control base in Adana, Turkey; sabotage of the aircraft in [redacted] and hijacking of the spyplane by a purported special Soviet intelligence unit codenamed *Molniya* ("lightning" in Russian). Soviet interest in acquiring a U-2 was well known in the community, and, farfetched as it sounded, the hijacking theory at least had the merit of resolving the dispute over the U-2's altitude when it was damaged. Although the Soviets claimed

it had been flying at 70,000 feet, the consensus of US intelligence officials at the time was that Soviet antiaircraft missiles could not reach it. That meant that either the U-2 had lost power and dropped within the missiles' range or that it was forced down some other way—according to the *Molniya* theory, because Soviet operatives had somehow drugged Powers.⁴¹ (U)

Another, more likely, possibility troubled McCone as much: Powers had defected and perhaps even had been a Soviet agent with the mission of delivering a U-2 behind the Iron Curtain. Former DDCI John McMahon—at the time a high-ranking official in the U-2 program—has said that just after Powers was shot down, McCone thought the pilot had defected. Nothing McCone had learned since May 1960—including a favorable CIA security review of Powers that he probably saw or knew about—had changed his mind. A defection would have partly explained some of the U-2 incident's anomalies: Powers's failure to use his ejection seat, which would have set off the aircraft's camera-destruct mechanism; the relatively good condition of the wreckage; Powers's reportedly comfortable treatment while in prison; and—from a counterintelligence standpoint, probably the most disquieting improbability—his emergence relatively unscathed from what experts considered an unsurvivable freefall and parachute drop from an extreme height. As the former director general of Britain's Royal Air Force medical service publicly commented at the time:

It is utterly impossible for a pilot to bail out [at that altitude] without using ejection equipment. He would be destroyed instantly by the slipstream and air pressure. Should he survive this, he could not last more than 45 seconds without the oxygen equipment attached to the ejection seat, and the 50-below cold would make life impossible.⁴² ~~(S)~~

According to Lawrence Houston, McCone [redacted] suspected that Powers had flown his plane to a lower altitude and then parachuted before Soviet missiles shot it down. The fact that, as Houston put it, "we [CIA] were getting slightly different stories" from Powers during intensive debriefings by technical and operations officers in February 1962 made McCone even

³⁹ Beschloss, *Mayday*, 351; James J. White, "Francis Gary Powers—The Unmaking of a Hero, 1960–1965," unpublished manuscript (1974), 7, copy in History Staff files. (U)

⁴⁰ Powers made the statement on the advice of his Soviet defense counsel. (U)

⁴¹ Riebling, 156–57; Beschloss, *Mayday*, 358; Peter J. Huxley-Blythe, "What About U-2 Mystery?" [December 1960] in Powers FBI FOIA file. (U)

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more skeptical. Of course, McCone did not want the Agency's suspicions of Powers to leak out. Just after Powers was released, a journalist asked the DCI whether the pilot was a defector. McCone responded, "[O]f course a small segment of people in the U.S. may think so, but there was nothing so far that would give credence to that belief." The DCI did not hint that he was in that "small segment of people."⁴³ ~~XX~~

McCone disagreed with the findings of the CIA damage assessment team that debriefed Powers for two weeks after his repatriation and largely exonerated him. That was the same team that had met in the summer of 1960 to estimate what Powers knew about the overflight program and could have told Soviet interrogators. After the 1962 debriefings, the team concluded that Powers's disclosures had caused much less harm than previously thought and indicated it was satisfied with his behavior in captivity.⁴⁴ ~~XX~~

At Houston's suggestion, McCone quickly convened a board of inquiry to consider whether the US government should charge Powers with dereliction of duty. The board's members were retired federal judge E. Barrett Prettyman, the chairman; John Bross from the DDP; and Lt. Gen. Harold Bull, a consultant to ONE. McCone directed the board to answer three questions: Did Powers fulfill the terms of his contract with CIA? Did he conduct himself in captivity as a patriotic American should? Did the Agency's management of the U-2 program need improvement? The Prettyman panel spent nine days reviewing a large body of information, ~~XX~~

~~XX~~; testimony from 23 witnesses, including Powers, military personnel associated with him, and medical experts; a film of Powers's trial; ~~XX~~

~~XX~~ and photographs of the U-2's wreckage and an analysis of them by the plane's builder, "Kelly" Johnson of Lockheed. In a 14-page letter to McCone, the board stated its conclusions: "[T]he evidence establishes overwhelmingly that Powers's account was...truthful...that throughout this incident Powers acted in accordance with the terms of his employment and instructions and briefings...and that he complied with his obligations as an American citizen." Accordingly, Powers was entitled to back pay of approximately \$52,000. Around the same time, a group of Air Force experts, convened by the secretary of the Air Force at McCone's request, supported Johnson's analysis (and Powers's description) that a nearby explosion could have broken off the aircraft's wings.⁴⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone was unconvinced and kept looking for reasons to penalize Powers. His concerns about Powers's supposed misjudgments and possible security breaches came through clearly in questions he posed to Houston just after reading the Prettyman report. McCone wanted to know if Powers could have been in touch with outsiders after he received the mission brief; if Soviet aviation activity during the flight was unusual, suggesting the Soviets already knew about it; and if Powers's actions after his plane was damaged made it harder for him to activate the destruct mechanism. Houston's respective answers were: possibly, apparently, and probably not. With President Kennedy's assent, McCone reconvened the Prettyman board to reconsider the only evidence that

⁴² John McMahon oral history interview by ~~XX~~ Chantilly, VA, 4 December 1997, 32 (hereafter McMahon, ~~XX~~ OH); Riebling, 157-58; Fulton Lewis, "Washington Report," 24 August 1960, Powers FBI FOIA file. ~~XX~~

Several reports about Powers's private contacts, suggesting that he might have defected, were all found to be provocations. For example, CIA had determined by September 1960 that a British report that the Soviets had recruited Powers in late 1959 was false. An Agency counterintelligence officer called the information "the last checkable lead on any reference to disloyalty on the part of Powers." It is not known if McCone was aware of the report or the evaluation. ~~XX~~

(March 1972), 208; ~~XX~~ memorandum to Bissell, 26 September 1960, DDO Files, Job 64-00352R, box 1, folder 11. ~~XX~~

For Soviet versions of the shutdown—from an air defense analyst who prepared the technical questions used in Powers's prison interrogations, and from Khrushchev's son—that corroborate Powers's account, see Alexander Orlov, "Russia, 'Hot' Front of the 'Cold' War," *Geopolitical Forecasts: Past, Present, Future* (1997), FBIS Translated Text FTS19981007000076, 27-33; and Sergei N. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*, 365-83. ~~XX~~

⁴³ Beschloss, *Mayday*, 356-57 citing interview with Houston on 17 January 1983; Grogan untitled memorandum, 12 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 1. ~~XX~~

⁴⁴ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 183-84; Grogan untitled memorandum, 12 February 1962, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 1. ~~XX~~

⁴⁵ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 184-85; Houston memorandum to McCone, "Board of Inquiry for Francis Gary Powers and Terms of Reference," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 22, folder 2; McCone directive concerning Board of Inquiry, 19 February 1962, *ibid.*; ~~XX~~ memorandum to Houston, "Summary of Events—Board of Inquiry Task Force," *ibid.*, folder 1; Prettyman, Bross, and Bull letter to McCone, 27 February 1962, *ibid.*, folder 2; Board of Inquiry debriefing of Powers, ~~XX~~ Job 84B00459R, box 1; Beschloss, *Mayday*, 352-54; Chris Pocock, *The U-2 Spyplane*, 242-43; Johnson, *Kelly: More Than My Share of It All*, 128-29; White, "Powers," 17-18; ~~XX~~

²³ Powers's contract with CIA provided for him to continue receiving his pay under the terms of the Missing Persons Act while he was in prison. Warner memorandum to Dulles, "Continuance of Pay of Francis G. Powers," OGC 61-1454, 24 August 1961, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 34, folder 13. ~~XX~~

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contradicted Powers' testimony. [redacted]

In early March 1962, the Agency issued a public statement—approved by McCone—that seemed to accept Powers's version of the shootdown. The pilot had "lived up to the terms of his employment...and...his obligations as an American"; "no evidence has been found" of Soviet espionage activity (i.e., Powers did not try to defect) or of sabotage. On the Prettyman board's conclusion [redacted] the statement said:

Some information from confidential sources was available. Some of it corroborated Powers and some of it was inconsistent with parts with Powers's story, but that which was inconsistent was in part contradictory with itself and subject to various interpretations. Some of this information was the basis for considerable speculation...that Powers' plane had descended gradually from its extreme altitude and had been shot down by a Russian fighter at medium altitude. On careful analysis, it appears that the information on which these stories were based was erroneous or was susceptible to varying interpretations. The board came to the conclusion that it could not accept a doubtful interpretation in this regard which was inconsistent with all the other known facts.⁴⁷ ~~(S)~~

The statement, however, did not dispel completely the impression that Powers somehow had done something unpatriotic. For Powers and his supporters, the devil was in

its nuances and omissions. The statement did not declare unequivocally that, in the Agency's judgment, his disclosures to the Soviets had not harmed national security, nor did it vouch for what Powers claimed he had and had not told his captors. Also, the Agency withheld other, more sensitive findings favorable to Powers. Consequently, at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing in early March 1962, one of the members asked McCone, "Don't you think he is being left with just a little bit of a cloud hanging over him? If he did everything he is supposed to do, why leave it hanging?" McCone declined this opportunity to endorse the Prettyman Board's findings, to acknowledge that Powers had concealed secrets while in captivity, or to officially absolve him. Powers appeared at an open hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, chaired by longtime Agency ally Richard Russell, and won praise from the members and generally favorable press coverage. In April, the Air Force reinstated Powers—a decision in which CIA, the Department of State, and the White House concurred—and Lockheed hired him as a test pilot the following December.⁴⁸ ~~(S)~~

The swing in public sentiment toward Powers must have irked McCone, who then took other steps against him. In late June 1962, the DCI decided that commercial publication of a book by Powers about the shootdown "would be harmful to Powers and not in the best interests of the Agency" and sent the general counsel and a high-ranking DDP officer to dissuade the pilot. They reported that after discussing the matter with Powers, "he was reluctantly receptive to our guidance." Powers wrote to McCone, however, that he might reconsider writing a book later. In April 1963, the DCI awarded the Intelligence Star to all American U-2 pilots except Powers, and he may have advised President Kennedy not to meet with Powers, even though a year before the president had welcomed two captured Air Force reconnaissance pilots released by Moscow.⁴⁹ ~~(S)~~

The Agency's investigation into John F. Kennedy's assassination gave McCone further reason to wonder about Powers. Lee Harvey Oswald was stationed at a U-2 base in Japan during 1957–58, before he defected to the Soviet Union in

⁴⁶ McCone and Houston memoranda, 28 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 22, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum of Discussion with the President...February 28, 1962..." McCone Papers, box 6, folder 1; Prettyman, Bross, and Bull letter to McCone, 27 February 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 22, folder 2. ~~(S)~~

⁴⁷ CIA, "Statement Concerning Francis Gary Powers," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 22, folder 2; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 185; Pocock, *Dragon Lady*, 52. According to John McMahon, [redacted] McMahon, [redacted] JFH, 51. ~~(S)~~

⁴⁸ CIA, "Statement Concerning Francis Gary Powers"; White, "Powers," 17; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 185; Beschloss, *Mayday*, 352–54; George C. Wilson, "Powers' Capitol Testimony Adds Little to Knowledge of U-2 Affair," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 12 March 1962, 317, Powers clipping file, HIC; David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The U-2 Affair*, chap. 15. A DDP regulation authorized captured U-2 pilots to disclose their Agency affiliation. The pilots were never ordered to commit suicide if they were about to be captured. The Senate committees did not release many of their exculpatory findings about Powers. ~~(S)~~

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1959, and speculation arose that he had divulged technical information about the U-2 program that would have helped the Soviets shoot down Powers's aircraft. By May 1964, CIA had concluded that Oswald did not have access to such information. After that possibility was discounted, McCone thought he had another reason to suspect that Powers had done something wrong.⁵⁰ (U)

Toward the end of his directorship, McCone appears to have decided to wash his hands of the Powers matter. In March 1965, he approved awarding the pilot the Intelligence Star. Two days before McCone stepped down, DDCI Marshall Carter presented Powers with the award, which bore the year 1963 engraved on the back.⁵¹ ~~XX~~

Improving Community Security (U)

The rash of counterintelligence and security incidents involving US citizens that erupted in the early 1960s required strong action from McCone in his capacities as DCI and chairman of USIB. Including those cases mentioned above, over a dozen US government personnel, most of them in the military or from NSA, were implicated in espionage activity for hostile services during 1961–65.⁵² Much of the response to those specific incidents was handled by the organizations in which the perpetrators worked.

Members of USIB also took broader steps at the community level to tighten and rationalize interagency security. ~~XX~~

McCone's statutory responsibilities for protecting sources and methods did not grant him specific authority to implement rules outside CIA, but he tried to rectify that situation through bureaucratic means.⁵³ He made substantial progress in overcoming agencies' jealous protection of their prerogatives and in encouraging them to recognize their mutual interests. Three of his first accomplishments along those lines were bringing to closure protracted negotiations over a system of uniform security control markings and procedures for disseminating and using intelligence, having USIB promulgate policies for exchanging counterintelligence and security information among member agencies, and establishing consistent counterintelligence and security practices at installations overseas. ~~XX~~

The DCI's main instrument was the Intelligence Board Security Committee (IBSEC), established in 1959 but energized during his tenure. Under the chairmanship of either the DCI or CIA's director of security, IBSEC also implemented PFIAB's recommendations for changes in security practices following the Dunlap case.⁵⁴ Those recommendations included imposing stricter standards for personal conduct (especially "abnormal sexual activity"); developing

⁴⁹ Helms memorandum to Carter, "Telephone Call From the Attorney General," 29 May 1962, DDO Files, Job 78-02888R, box 3, folder 8; Powers letter to McCone, 6 July 1962, and Carter untitled memorandum, 7 July 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 330; Kirkpatrick, Executive Memorandum 19, "Writings by Francis Gary Powers," 27 June 1962, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 1, folder 10; [redacted] memorandum to Houston, "Francis Gary Powers," 6 July 1962, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 1, folder 6; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record, Subject: Special Group Meeting—5412—26 April 1962," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 2; McCone letter to the president, 3 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 30, folder 4; CIA, "Statement Concerning Francis Gary Powers"; White, "Powers," 18, 22; Warner [redacted] OH, 27–28; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 185–86. ~~XX~~

According to John McMahon, Robert Kennedy asked McCone to pressure Powers not to write a book about the shootdown. David Wise and Thomas B. Ross were about to have *The U-2 Affair* published when they heard that Powers was going to write his own story. They did not want any competition and complained to the attorney general, who in turn told McCone that it was inappropriate for the pilot to write anything. McMahon [redacted] OH, 33. Kennedy's intervention notwithstanding, the DCI had his own motives for keeping Powers quiet. Powers eventually told his version in *Operation Overflight* (1970). [redacted]

The book does not mention McCone, and there are no references to it in his papers. ~~XX~~

⁵⁰ Helms memorandum to Hoover, "Lee Harvey Oswald's Access to Classified Information about the U-2," 13 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 272226. (U)

⁵¹ Pedlow and Welzenbach, 185–86; Beschloss, *Mayday*, 397; Polmar, *Spyplane*, 144–45; Carter untitled memorandum to McMahon, 27 March 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 25, folder 1; "CIA Honors U-2 Pilot Francis Gary Powers," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 May 1965, 5, Powers clipping file, HIC. ~~XX~~

On 1 May 2000, 40 years after Powers was shot down and captured, and 23 years after he died in a helicopter accident, the Air Force awarded him the Distinguished Flying Cross and the National Defense Service Medal. "US Finally Honors U-2 Spy Plane Pilot Gary Powers," Reuters story no. a3399, 1 May 2000. (U)

⁵² Jepson, 41–42; Stan A. Taylor and Daniel Snow, "Cold War Spies: Why They Spied and How They Got Caught," *ICNS* 12, no. 2 (April 1997): appendix A; USIB Security Committee, annual report for FY 1964, 14 September 1964, CMS Files, Job 93B01114R, box 2, folder 19. ~~XX~~

⁵³ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: [redacted]

Patrick L. Carpentier, "Security as an Intelligence Community Concern," *Studies* 10, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 60–61; *Annual Report for FY 1965*, 106; IBSEC annual reports for 1962–65, CMS Files, Job 93B01114R, box 2, folder 19; DCI Directive No. 1/7, "Controls for Dissemination and Use of Intelligence and Intelligence Information," 21 February 1962, ICS Files, Job 91B01063R, box 1, folder 15; Robert L. Bannerman (Director of Security) memorandum to IBSEC members, "Implementation of Recommendations of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board Resulting from the Dunlap Case," 28 July 1964, *ibid.*, folder 8. ~~XX~~

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more intense security indoctrination programs (including counterintelligence case studies); and resolving any doubts about a suspect employee in favor of protecting national security. After a former NSA cryptanalyst, Victor Hamilton, defected to the Soviet Union in 1963, IBSEC oversaw the response of community components in coordinating medical, security, and personnel information during applicant and employee investigations. ~~XX~~

Because military personnel committed most of the anti-US espionage uncovered in the early 1960s, McCone sought to tighten security procedures for servicemen in community organizations that fell under his purview as DCI. In practical terms, he could do little about NSA, which answered to the secretary of defense, and the military services' intelligence components were even farther from his reach. After the Dunlap case broke in the summer of 1963, McCone pointed out in a memorandum to Secretary of Defense McNamara how successful CIA's security procedures had been and commended them to the Pentagon. One entity he could deal with more directly was NPIC. He wrote to McNamara that he had determined that all Department of Defense employees assigned to NPIC would be investigated and processed as CIA personnel were, including the taking of a polygraph. The secretary of defense said he was anxious to begin polygraphing new military assignees at NSA but foresaw problems if that were done to Pentagon personnel currently at NPIC. McCone and McNamara therefore agreed that all servicemen detailed to NPIC in the future would be "fluttered" by the Agency's Office of Security. ~~XX~~

McCone made less progress in establishing uniform personnel security standards throughout the community. Expanding the scope of security investigations was expensive, and the DCI historically did not have responsibility for designating access to classified defense-related material. Discussions among community organizations about standards for access to sensitive compartmented information dragged on for the rest of McCone's tenure. In addition, unfavorable comments from several congressional committees about

using the polygraph on federal employees made it hard for McCone to incorporate the device more extensively in screening community personnel. ⁵⁶ ~~XX~~

Unauthorized disclosures of classified information in the media became a growing problem during McCone's directorship as journalists took a more adversarial approach toward the national security establishment in general and CIA in particular. McCone was sensitive to unfavorable publicity and "leaks," and he instituted many internal investigations into news stories that appeared to be based on classified information. These time-consuming inquiries almost always proved fruitless. The journalists had First Amendment protection, and their government sources were exceptionally difficult to uncover because so much intelligence was so widely disseminated within the community. Among numerous examples, two stand out as fair illustrations of the challenge McCone and USIB faced. (U)

⁵⁵ Kirkpatrick, "Memorandum for the Record...DCI Meeting with President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 13 September [1963]," DDO Files, Job 78-03805R, box 3, folder 12A; McCone memorandum to McNamara, 11 October 1963, ~~XX~~

⁵⁶ ~~XX~~ Kirkpatrick memorandum to Lawrence K. White, Action memorandum A-432, "Security clearances for military personnel assigned to NPIC," 21 October 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 2, folder 4. ~~XX~~

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McCone was willing to go along with another, more drastic, approach to preventing leaks—one identified in the so-called “Family Jewels” report of 1973 as among the most troubling of the Agency’s questionable domestic activities.⁶¹ “Project MOCKINGBIRD” was, according to the report, “a telephone intercept activity...conducted between 12 March 1963 and 15 June 1963...[that] targeted two Washington-based newsmen [Robert S. Allen and Paul Scott] who, at the time, had been publishing news articles based on, and frequently quoting, classified materials of this Agency and others, including Top Secret [redacted]”⁶² The Office of Security, then under Sheffield Edwards, ran MOCKINGBIRD. According to Walter Elder and a security officer who worked on the operation, Edwards received his orders from McCone, who agreed (under pressure from the attorney general) to authorize the wiretaps of the journalists’ homes and office. Because their main source(s) appeared to be

⁶¹ The “Family Jewels” report was a compendium of possibly illegal CIA activities that James Schlesinger ordered OIG to compile soon after he became DCI in February 1973. It included details of domestic spying, drug testing, mail opening, and assassination planning, some of which went on during McCone’s tenure. Press disclosures of some of the report’s contents precipitated investigations into CIA operations by the Rockefeller Commission and special congressional committees led by Sen. Frank Church and Rep. Otis Pike. (U)

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in the Department of Defense, McCone had Elder brief McNamara and the director of DIA. (An employee in ONE was regarded as the most likely leaker inside the Agency.) Besides the DCI and Elder, only three other Agency managers supposedly knew about MOCKINGBIRD—DDCI Carter, Executive Director-Comptroller Kirkpatrick, and General Counsel Houston. (A few security personnel who processed the take from the wiretaps also were witting.) ~~XX~~

MOCKINGBIRD did not identify Allen and Scott's specific sources, but it helped reveal the journalists' methods and many of their contacts outside CIA and the Pentagon, including members of Congress and their staffers, administration officials, and current and former federal employees. By showing how far well-connected Washington newsmen cast their reportorial nets, the operation underscored how difficult it was to catch leakers *en flagrante delicto*. Surveillance of Allen and Scott was suspended after a few months, and MOCKINGBIRD was terminated, just after McCone left Langley. ⁶³ ~~XX~~

The Man Who Protected the Secrets (U)

The several-year outbreak of counterintelligence and security incidents that began in the late 1950s and continued through McCone's tenure was the worst the Intelligence Community faced until the "decade of the spy" in the 1980s. The cases arose at a politically inopportune time for the DCI, charged as he was after the Bay of Pigs with properly managing CIA's clandestine activities and preventing operational embarrassments. Some of the counterintelligence and security episodes that came to term during his tenure resulted from mistakes and oversights committed before, but as the incumbent, McCone had to accept responsibility for them. He generally handled the controver-

sies appropriately, avoiding undue publicity, allaying policymakers' concerns, and instituting useful preventatives at the community level. Perhaps as important, he appreciated his own limitations in the counterintelligence field, and, except for cases that were especially sensitive or that disrupted liaison relationships, he left CI matters to more experienced lieutenants. That said, while he was willing to entertain the maxim that "no intelligence service can for very long be any better than its counterintelligence component," he did not blithely accept unfounded ideas from even as vaunted an intellect as James Angleton. (U)

On the debit side, McCone's relative inexperience with counterintelligence probably made him defer too much to his operations deputies, Helms and Angleton. Had McCone given the Golitsyn defection more direct attention, some of the early problems it caused internally and with sister services might have been avoided or attenuated. The forbearance McCone and his deputies exhibited toward that difficult case said more about the Agency's poverty of Soviet intelligence sources than anything else. Some espionage operations that hostile services began or kept running in the early and mid-1960s went undetected even when CIA's counterintelligence capabilities arguably were as keen as they ever would be. Lastly, McCone did not recognize that the Agency's CI efforts were too focused on European problems and Soviet operations while the Cold War—including the one fought in the shadows—was fast becoming a multipolar, truly global conflict. Serving under two activist administrations, he helped the Agency take espionage and covert action into new theaters. Counterintelligence at CIA, in contrast—perhaps reflecting its bureaucratic culture of compartmentation and secrecy, and the *idée fixe* of Angleton—remained parochial, inbred, and unadaptive during McCone's directorship. (U)

⁶² Sources for this section are: Project MOCKINGBIRD synopsis and Elder memorandum to Colby, "Special Activities," 1 June 1973, "Family Jewels" report, 21, 457; Project MOCKINGBIRD summaries submitted to the Rockefeller Commission, March 1975, *ibid.*, box 10, folders 182 and 216; Bannerman memorandum to McCone, "Articles by Robert Allen and Paul Scott...", 5 March 1963, with attached memorandum from USIB Security Committee to USIB, "Protection of Intelligence Sources and Methods: Articles by Robert Allen and Paul Scott," 1 March 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 8, folder 168; *Rockefeller Commission Report*, 164; *Church Committee Report*, vol. 2, 102–3. McCone was not questioned about MOCKINGBIRD when he testified to the Church Committee. ~~XX~~

⁶³ Soon after he became DCI, McCone had a run-in with [redacted] over an article they wrote about [redacted] purportedly gave at the White House to congressional leaders in late 1961 or early 1962. The DCI insisted no such briefing took place, but [redacted] stuck to the story. McCone told public affairs chief Stanley Grogan that "[t]his fellow is lying to you...and we can nail him if we get cooperation from the White House." When he met with the reporters in late March 1962, the DCI charged them with "gross carelessness and irresponsibility" in several of their articles—including ones about alleged communists working at CIA, and misjudgments of ONE. [redacted] agreed to check anything they wrote about CIA with Grogan or McCone in the future. Untitled file memorandum about McCone meeting with Grogan, undated but early 1962, and Grogan untitled memorandum about McCone meeting with [redacted] on 20 March 1962, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 8, folder 168. McCone's effort in 1964 to quash the book by investigative reporters David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government*, is discussed in Chapter 16. ~~XX~~

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Death of the President (U)

John McCone and Lyman Kirkpatrick, the Agency's Executive Director-Comptroller, met with PFIAB through the morning of 22 November 1963. The main topic of discussion was CIA's image problem, which McCone attributed to hostile journalists. The DCI planned to fly to California that afternoon for the Thanksgiving holiday and, before leaving, over lunch, wanted to talk about the PFIAB meeting with his senior deputies. He, Kirkpatrick, Richard Helms, Albert Wheelon, Ray Cline, and Sherman Kent were eating in the French Room, a small space next to the director's office, when Walter Elder dashed in and cried out, "The president's been shot!"¹ ~~XX~~

McCone turned on the television, watched the news bulletins, phoned the attorney general at his nearby home, and said, "I'm going to Hickory Hill to be with Bobby."² The DCI made his call before the overloaded Washington-area telephone system went down 30 minutes after the first news from Dallas. He remembered wondering on the short drive to the Kennedy house "who could be responsible for a thing like this. Was it the result of bigotry and hatred that was expressed in certain areas of the country, of which Dallas was one? Was this an international plot?" (U)

While McCone was with Robert and Ethel Kennedy in their second floor library, the attorney general answered the phone, listened briefly, and then said, "He's dead." McCone recalled feeling shock, disbelief, profound sadness, and great concern for the country. A few minutes later, he and Robert left the house and walked around the lawn, speaking privately. One of the numerous phone calls to interrupt them was from Vice President Lyndon Johnson in Dallas. After expressing his condolences, Johnson told Robert that the assassination might be part of a worldwide plot and indicated that he probably should be sworn in right away. The attorney general was initially taken aback but then agreed,

found out the appropriate procedure from the Department of Justice, and informed the presidential entourage in Dallas. He wanted to fly there right away, but McCone said that would take too long and suggested instead that the slain president's body be brought to Washington as soon as possible. Air Force One landed at Andrews Air Force Base that evening, and John Kennedy's body was taken to Bethesda Naval Medical Center for an autopsy. Meanwhile, the controversy over who had killed him, and why, had already begun. ~~XX~~

Initial Fears of a Conspiracy (U)

McCone returned to Headquarters at around 1530, summoned the CIA Executive Committee, asked the Intelligence Community's Watch Committee to convene at the Pentagon, issued orders for all stations and bases to report any signs of a conspiracy and to watch all Soviet personnel, especially intelligence officers, for indications that the Soviet Union was trying to take advantage of the disarray in Washington. The immediate reaction at Langley, as elsewhere in the US government, was to suspect that a foreign, probably communist-directed, effort to destabilize the United States might be underway. Richard Helms recalled that "[w]e all went to battle stations over the possibility that this might be a plot—and who was pulling the strings. We were very busy sending messages all over the world to pick up anything that might indicate that a conspiracy had been formed to kill the President of the United States—and then what was to come next." One of the first cables was the following message Helms sent to all CIA stations overseas:

Tragic death of President Kennedy requires all of us to look sharp for any unusual intelligence developments. Although we have no reason to expect anything of a

¹ Sources for this introductory section are: Clifford, 378; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 339, n. 25; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 608–9; Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *The Kennedys: An American Drama*, 395; C. David Heymann, *RFK: A Candid Biography of Robert F. Kennedy*, 345–47; William Manchester, *The Death of a President*, 256–57; Richard Helms interview in "Kennedy Remembered," *Newsweek* 102, no. 48 (28 November 1983): 75; Kirkpatrick ~~XX~~ OH, 28; McCone calendars, entry for 22 November 1963; transcript of McCone interview with William Manchester, 10 April 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 8; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 22 November 1963; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, 672 citing interview with Helms; author's conversation with Helms, 16 April 1998. For once at the onset of a crisis, McCone was at Langley while Marshall Carter was away (quail hunting at the Farm). Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 132. ~~XX~~

² Robert Kennedy was holding a luncheon meeting on organized crime with two Department of Justice officials when FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover called to tell him that the president had been shot. Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power*, 383; Heymann, 345. (U)

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particular military nature, all hands should be on the quick alert at least for the next few days while new president takes over reins.³ (U)

In addition, McCone directed that a special cable channel be established so that all traffic related to Lee Harvey Oswald—arrested in Dallas soon after the shooting—went to a central repository, and he sent a

to Parkland Hospital, where John Kennedy had been taken for emergency treatment, to coordinate activities with the Secret Service and the FBI. After the Secret Service obtained a graphic film of the assassination taken by an amateur photographer named Abraham Zapruder, McCone had NPIC officers analyze the footage (particularly the time between shots) and prepare briefing boards for the service.⁴ ~~SECRET~~



Lee Harvey Oswald (U)
Photo: UPI/Bettman

Some senior Agency officers looked into possible KGB involvement. The chief of the DDP's SR Division, David Murphy, framed the essential question the day after: "[W]as Oswald, wittingly or unwittingly, part of a plot to murder President Kennedy in Dallas as an attempt to further exacerbate sectional strife and render the US government less capable of dealing with Soviet initiatives over the next year?" Also on the 23rd, Mexico City station reported that less than two months earlier, Oswald had met with a KGB officer possibly from the Thirteenth Directorate—responsible for assassination and sabotage—at the Soviet embassy in Mexico City. Headquarters officers speculated on 24 November that "[a]lthough it appears that he [Oswald] was then thinking only about a peaceful change of residence to the Soviet Union, it is also possible that he was getting documented to make a quick escape after assassinating the President."⁵ (U)

The Agency's inability to locate Nikita Khrushchev right after the assassination especially alarmed McCone and his deputies. The Soviet premier's apparent absence from Moscow could have meant that he was in a secret command center, either hunkering down for an American reprisal, or possibly preparing to strike at the United States. "We were very high in tension about any indicators which would support such a theme," Helms said. "It became manifest within 24 or 48 hours, however, that this was not the case." ~~SECRET~~

³ Beschloss, *Crisis Years*, 672 citing interview with Helms; DIR 84608, 22 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 47694. (U)

⁴ Knoche memorandum to Robert R. Olsen (Senior Counsel, Rockefeller Commission), 29 April 1975, 14, MORI doc. no. 350496; CIA, *The History of the National Photographic Interpretation Center, 1963–1993*, 21; David R. Wrone, *The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK's Assassination*, 28–29. NPIC had difficulty computing the exact time of exposure of the frames on Zapruder's film because the camera he used was spring-wound, which caused the timing of the frames to vary slightly from the standard of 18 per second.

Oswald in early November 1959 after it was notified of his defection to the Soviet Union. Oswald's [redacted] CIA had opened counterintelligence and security files on [redacted] was opened in December 1960 to contain cables, news clippings, and other material accumulated in response to an inquiry from the Department of State about a list of 12 American defectors in Soviet Bloc countries; Oswald's name was on the list. Helms memorandum to J. Lee Rankin (Warren Commission), "Information in CIA's Possession Regarding Lee Harvey Oswald Prior to November 22, 1963," 6 March 1964, MORI doc. no. 48392; House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), draft report, "Lee Harvey Oswald Was Not Associated as an Agent or in [Any] Other Capacity with the CIA," undated but c. mid-1978, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK24, folder 46; Newman, 54–58; material in Lee Harvey Oswald clipping file, folder 1, HIC. ~~SECRET~~

⁵ Tennent H. Bagley (SR Division/CI Branch) memorandum to Karamessines, "Cable from Chief, SR Division, re Possible KGB role in Kennedy Slaying," 23 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 263529; Bagley memorandum to Karamessines, "Contact of Lee OSWALD with a member of Soviet KGB Assassination Department," 23 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 48326; DIR 84920, 24 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 25518. (U)

CIA did not establish that the Soviet with whom Oswald met, Valeriy Kostikov, was from the KGB's "wet affairs" department. According to transcripts of their telephone conversations [redacted] they only discussed Oswald's request for a visa. By early 1964, the Agency had concluded that Oswald's contact with [redacted] than a grim coincidence...." Bagley untitled memorandum about Kostikov, 27 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 378020; Helms memorandum to Rankin, "Valeriy Vladimirovich KOSTIKOV," 16 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 367204; Hoover memorandum to Helms, "Valeriy V. Kostikov..." 15 September 1964, MORI doc. no. 270452; CI Staff, "Summary of Oswald Case Prepared for Briefing Purposes Circa 10 December 1963," MORI doc. no. 48723. Oleg Nechiporenko, one of the KGB officers in Mexico City during Oswald's trip there, has recounted the Soviets' dealings with him in *Passport to Assassination*. (U)

One of the Agency's star Soviet defectors, Peter Deriabin, wrote a lengthy memorandum a few days after the assassination arguing that Oswald was a KGB agent who either was dispatched to kill Kennedy or was sent to the United States on another mission and then committed the murder on his own. Deriabin contended that the Kremlin would have accomplished several objectives by eliminating Kennedy. Among them were removing the West's preeminent Cold Warrior from the scene; constraining US covert actions against Cuba, which would be stigmatized as acts of vengeance; and diverting the Soviet people's attention from domestic problems. Deriabin's conjectures did not find much of an audience at Headquarters. Deriabin memorandum to [redacted] (SR Division/CI Branch), "Comments on President Kennedy's Assassination," 27 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 393150. (U)

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[redacted] news of the assassination deeply shocked their leaders and made them fear US retaliation.⁶ ~~CS~~

For some time after the assassination, and particularly following Oswald's murder on the 24th, Agency leaders would not rule out a domestic or foreign conspiracy—the latter possibly involving the Soviet Union or Cuba. A Headquarters cable on the 28th stated that “[w]e have by no means excluded the possibility that other as yet unknown persons may have been involved or even that other powers may have played a role.” On 1 December, the station in Mexico City, where Oswald had visited the Soviet and Cuban consulates a few weeks before the assassination, was told to “continue to follow all leads and tips. The question of whether Oswald acted solely on his own has still not been finally resolved.” Two weeks later, Headquarters told the station to “continue watch for...evidence of their [Soviet or Cuban] complicity...” McCone suggested two possible culprits if Oswald had not acted alone. “Castro's been so frightfully intemperate in some of his talks,” he told a senior Pentagon official, and “it would be within his capability if he thought he could get away with it, I think. Khrushchev, no. On the other hand, I don't know how completely Khrushchev controls the KGB.” If either theory proved credible, Helms remembered, “[w]e could have had a very nasty situation. What would be the retaliation? A startled America could do some extreme things...”⁷ ~~CS~~

Besides determining whether an international crisis was imminent, Agency officers also tried to find out as much as they could about Oswald. Mexico City station reported on the 22nd that he had been at the Soviet and Cuban embassies in the Mexican capital during late September-early

October. Most of the assassination-related information about which McCone briefed President Johnson, McGeorge Bundy, and Dean Rusk during the next week concerned the Oswald-Cuba connection. On 23 November, McCone apprised the president and Bundy of the station's trace results. Later in the day, the station reported that the Mexican police had arrested a Mexican national working at the Cuban consulate who supposedly talked to Oswald in September. That evening, McCone told Rusk about all these developments. On the 25th, a Nicaraguan walk-in to the US embassy in Mexico City said that when he was in the Cuban consulate in mid-September, he heard Cubans talk about assassination and saw them give Oswald money. Within a few days, however, this alarming report was shown to be a fabrication. McCone discussed the incident with the president and Bundy on 30 November and 1 December. Between 23 November and 5 December, the DCI briefed Johnson on assassination developments and other intelligence matters every day but two—in varying measures, to communicate news about the investigation, to demonstrate how CIA was involved in it, and to create a bond with the new president.⁸ ~~CS~~

McCone also participated in two rituals surrounding John Kennedy's death. On Saturday the 23rd, he went to the White House to pay last respects to the president, and on Monday the 25th, he attended the state funeral at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington. That morning, CIA and the FBI received numerous reports that attempts would be made to assassinate foreign leaders invited to the funeral. McCone personally told one of the supposed targets, French President de Gaulle, about the threats against him. Fifty-eight CIA security officers joined the detail at the funeral, along the route of the procession, and at Arlington

⁶ Kirkpatrick [redacted] OH, 29; Helms interview in “Kennedy Remembered,” 75. Khrushchev had reappeared by the morning of the 23rd, when he met with US Ambassador Foy Kohler. Moscow Embassy cable to Secretary of State, EMBTEL 1759, 23 November 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 9 ~~CS~~. The Soviet Union immediately tried to dispel notions that it was behind the assassination. Less than 15 minutes after Kennedy's death was announced, the TASS news service issued a bulletin that rightwing extremists in the United States were responsible. Eastern European stations picked up and spread the story. According to former KGB officer Oleg Kalugin, who was stationed in New York at the time, “the Kremlin leadership was clearly rattled by Oswald's Soviet connection.” KGB Headquarters sent “frantic cables...ordering us to do everything possible” to quell suspicions of Soviet involvement in Kennedy's death. “We were told to put forward the line that Oswald could have been involved in a conspiracy with American reactionaries displeased with the President's recent efforts to improve relations with Russia.... [T]he message we were to convey was clear: ‘Inform the American public through every possible channel that we never trusted Oswald and were never in any way connected with him.’” Moscow tried to play down Oswald's tie to the Soviet Union by insinuating that he was a Trotskyite or a Marxist of some undetermined sort, and not a “real” communist. Walter Elder recalled thinking that the Soviets' denials were too scripted; “it was almost like they were reading from a manual.” Reviewing the early Soviet “line” on the assassination a few months later, Agency analysts suggested that “the charge against the extreme right was perhaps a ‘conditioned reflex’.... Hoodwinked by its own preconceptions and wishful thinking[,] the Kremlin almost inevitably concluded that President Kennedy had been struck down by his most radical right-wing opponents.” Other Soviet publications further confused the picture by propagating assorted conspiracy theories. *Izvestia*, the government newspaper, and *Red Star*, the army periodical, speculated that organized crime was involved, while *Pravda*, the Communist Party organ, and *Nedelnya*, a news magazine, proposed that Oswald was not the assassin. Media in satellite countries disseminated those notions also. Oleg Kalugin with Fen Montaigne, *The First Directorate*, 58; Elder quoted in Evan Thomas, “The Real Cover-Up,” *Newsweek* 122, no. 46 (22 November 1993): 76; CIA memorandum to the Warren Commission, “Rumors About Lee Harvey Oswald,” 23 March 1964, 2-3, 6, 8, MORI doc. no. 355927; Armand Moss, *Disinformation, Misinformation, and the “Conspiracy” to Kill JFK Exposed*, 16-17, 23-26. (U)

⁷ DIR 85655, 28 November 1963, DIR 86064, 1 December 1963, and DIR 88680, 13 December 1963, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 39; transcript of McCone conversation with Brockway McMillan, 27 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; Helms quoted in Thomas, “The Real JFK Cover-Up,” 78. ~~CS~~

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Cemetery. Later that day, the DCI went to a reception for visiting dignitaries hosted by President Johnson at the Department of State.⁹ ~~X~~

Because of their relationship, McCone had frequent contact with Robert Kennedy during the painful days after the assassination. Their communication appears to have been verbal, informal, and, evidently in McCone's estimation, highly personal; no memoranda or transcripts exist or are known to have been made. The DCI no doubt passed on to the attorney general the same information about Oswald, the Soviet Union, and Cuba that he gave to Johnson and other senior administration officials. In addition, because Robert Kennedy had overseen the Agency's anti-Castro covert actions—including some of the assassination plans—his dealings with McCone about his brother's murder had a special gravity. Did Castro kill the president because the president had tried to kill Castro? Had the administration's obsession with Cuba inadvertently inspired a politicized sociopath to murder John Kennedy? In 1975, according to one of the Warren Commission's lawyers, McCone

said he felt there was something troubling Kennedy that he was not disclosing.... McCone said he now feels Kennedy may very well have thought that there was some connection between the assassination plans against Castro and the assassination of President Kennedy. He also added his personal belief that Robert Kennedy had personal feelings of guilt because he

was directly or indirectly involved with the anti-Castro planning.

As head of CIA when much of that planning took place, McCone also might have had such feelings. A distraught Kennedy even had McCone affirm that the Agency itself was not involved in the assassination. When New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison made that allegation in 1967, Kennedy was prompted to recall that soon after the assassination he had asked McCone "if they [the Agency] had killed my brother.... I asked him in a way he couldn't lie to me, and [he said] they hadn't."¹⁰ (U)

Managing CIA's Part in the Investigation (U)

The FBI took the lead in the federal investigation of President Kennedy's murder. CIA supported the Bureau by obtaining information from clandestine and liaison sources outside the United States and from foreign contacts inside, principally in the Cuban refugee community in Florida. The Agency concentrated first on Oswald's activities in Mexico City in September and October 1963, and then on his residency in the Soviet Union during 1959–62 and his possible ties to Soviet intelligence. Within a week, Headquarters received [] about Oswald and forwarded them to the White House, the FBI, the Department of State, and the Secret Service. After 29 November, CIA also began assisting the Warren Commission's inquiry.¹¹ (U)

⁹ CIA memorandum, "Summary of Relevant Information on Lee Harvey Oswald at 0700 on 24 November 1963," MORI doc. no. 48657; McCone memoranda dated 23 and 24 November and 2 and 3 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; McCone note to Bundy, 28 November 1963, *ibid.*, box 8, folder 1; Birch D. O'Neal (CI Staff) untitled memorandum about Nicaraguan source, 26 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 378043; DIR 85089, 26 November 1963, DIR 85258, 27 November 1963, DIR 86063, 30 November 1963, MEXI 7289, 7 December 1963, and DIR 87666, 7 December 1963, MORI doc. nos. 263758, 12962, 356157, 47986, and 274952; DIR 86064, 1 December 1963, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 39; *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 24, 27–30; McCone telephone conversation with President Johnson, 30 November 1963, *Taking Charge*, 78; McCone calendars, entries for 23 November–5 December 1963. The bogus Nicaraguan walk-in was just one of many false sources that US intelligence services had to evaluate right after the assassination. As Headquarters officers noted in a cable to Mexico City station, "We and other agencies are being flooded by fabrications on the [Oswald] case from several continents, some originating with people on the fringes of the intelligence business. Such fabrications are not usually done for money, but out of sickly fancy and a desire to get into the intelligence game." DIR 85616, 27 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 47629. ~~X~~

Also on 23 November, OCI prepared a special edition of the *President's Intelligence Checklist*, dated the 22nd and bearing this dedication: "[I]n honor of President Kennedy[,] for whom the President's Intelligence Checklist was first written on 17 June 1961." These were the only contents of that memorial issue:

For this day, the Checklist Staff can find no words more fitting than a verse quoted by the President to a group of newspapermen the day he learned of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.
Bullfight critics ranked in rows
Crowd the enormous plaza full;
But only one is there who *knows*
And he's the man who fights the bull.

President's Intelligence Checklist, 22 November 1963, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 2, folder 9; see also Andrew, 10 of photograph section. (U)

¹⁰ McCone calendars, entries for 23 and 25 November 1963; James J. Rowley (Chief, Secret Service) letter to McCone, 9 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 29, folder 14; transcript of McCone interview with Manchester, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 8; Manchester, 575. ~~X~~

¹¹ David W. Belin, *Final Disclosure: The Full Truth About the Assassination of President Kennedy*, 217; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 616 citing Walter Sheridan (Department of Justice) oral history interview, 12 June 1970. Early intercepts of Cuban diplomatic communications indicated that Havana was mystified about Kennedy's killing. Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 133. (U)

¹² Anonymous CIA memorandum, "What collection requirements were issued to the field with regard to Kennedy's assassination?," undated, MORI doc. no. 476431; [] report, "We Discover Lee OSWALD in Mexico City," 13 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 48683, 6. (U)

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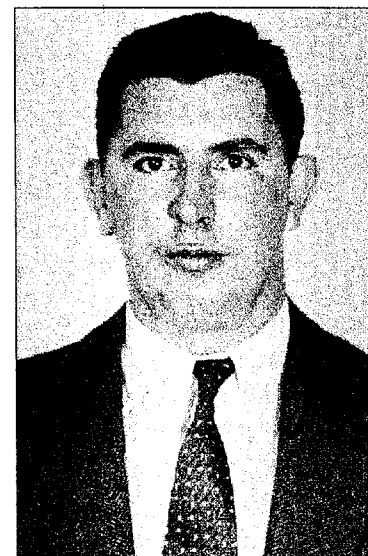
Death of the President (U)

As DCI, McCone's role between the assassination and the release of the commission's report 10 months later was, in his words, "to see that the investigation and the review of the CIA's relationship, if any, with Oswald were thoroughly studied and all relevant matters conveyed to the Warren Commission." According to Helms, McCone's function was "see[ing] to it that sufficient manpower and funds and other resources of the Agency were put to work in support of the Warren Commission and the FBI." McCone "certainly...maintained a continuing and abiding interest in these proceedings" but turned over daily management of the Agency's assassination-related activities to Helms, who kept the DCI, the DDCI, and the executive director informed. McCone's calendars indicate that after a flurry of meetings and discussions during the two weeks following Kennedy's death, he settled back into a routine schedule with his usual concentration on Intelligence Community affairs and foreign policy issues.¹² ~~XX~~

Helms, in turn, designated the chief of the Mexican branch in WH Division, John Whitten, to run CIA's initial collection and dissemination efforts, and an officer in the CI Staff's Special Investigations Group, Birch O'Neal, to handle liaison with the FBI. After Whitten issued a report in December on Oswald's activities in Mexico City, Helms—at James Angleton's request, according to Whitten—shifted responsibility for Agency support for the FBI and the Warren Commission to the CI Staff. Helms did so for three reasons: Whitten's paper was not regarded as quality work; the assassination investigation had a counterintelligence element; and Angleton's shop provided a tightly controlled channel of communication.¹³ ~~XX~~

The CI Staff's chief analyst, Raymond Rocca, was the Agency's senior point of contact for day-to-day business related to the assassination. When needed, other Agency officers—notably Helms and the top managers in the SR and WH divisions (David Murphy and J.C. King, respec-

tively)—dealt directly with the commission and the FBI. According to Rocca, the CI Staff concentrated on Soviet leads while WH worked the Cuban angle. McCone evidently had no problem with this bureaucratic arrangement or with any other part of Helms's management of CIA's role. "[I]f he had been dissatisfied," Helms observed later, "he would have made his dissatisfaction clear[,] and I wouldn't have forgotten it."¹³ ~~XX~~



Raymond Rocca (U)

The shift of responsibility to the CI Staff also had the potential benefit of improving CIA coordination with the FBI, which had long dealt with Angleton's unit. Agency-Bureau relations had grown tense after the assassination because of jurisdictional disputes. Early on, McCone tried to assure J. Edgar Hoover that the FBI was in charge of the investigation and that CIA would be as helpful as it could be. In a short telephone conversation on 26 November, the DCI took almost every available opportunity to conciliate the bureau chief:

I just want to be sure that you are satisfied that this Agency is giving you all the help that we possibly can in connection with your investigation of the situation in Dallas. I know the importance the President places on this investigation you are making. He asked me personally whether CIA was giving you full support. I

¹² McCone deposition to HSCA, 17 August 1978 (hereafter McCone HSCA deposition), 5–6, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 4, 11, 57. ~~XX~~

¹³ *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 4, 11, vol. 11, 57, 475–77; James Angleton deposition to HSCA, 5 October 1978, 76ff., and Raymond Rocca deposition to HSCA, 17 July 1978, 6 passim, HS Files Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 11 (hereafter Angleton HSCA deposition and Rocca HSCA deposition); anonymous CIA memorandum, "CIA Personnel Involved in Oswald Case during Existence of Warren Commission," undated, MORI doc. no. 287755; Rocca memorandum, "Conversation with David W. Belin, 1 April 1975," MORI doc. no. 404002; [redacted] memorandum to Angleton, [redacted] "Inaccuracies and Errors in Draft of GPFLOOR Report," undated but c. 1 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 269997. Rocca did not recall meeting with McCone during the post-assassination period. Rocca HSCA deposition, 27. ~~XX~~

The Agency's assassination inquiry was a major test of its data retrieval capabilities—particularly the computerized name-trace system developed for it by IBM and known as [redacted] which combined punch cards and microfilm. In his appearance before the commission, McCone encouraged federal agencies to computerize their records to facilitate investigations. "The [redacted] system," unpublished manuscript (June 1998), copy on file in the History Staff; Jeremiah O'Leary, "McCone Claims Computers Could Aid in Investigations," *Washington Evening Star*, 5 October 1964, A1, JFK Assassination clipping file, HIC; Directorate of Operations, Information Management Staff, [redacted] "A History of Applied Technology" (May 2001), 21–22, 65. ~~XX~~

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said that they were, but I just wanted to be sure from you that you felt so.... [Y]ou can call on us for anything we have.... I think it is an exceedingly important investigation and report[,] and I am delighted that the President has called on you to make it.¹⁴ ~~SECRET~~

Despite McCone's ingratiating diplomacy and the CI Staff's liaison role, relations between the two agencies worsened during the postassassination period. The Bureau's four-volume report, issued in early December, did not mention CIA, referred to just two pieces of information that the Agency had provided, and contained much material that CIA officers had not seen before but that was germane to their own inquiries, such as extensive information on Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union. In mid-December, Hoover voiced suspicions that McCone had questioned the Bureau's investigative abilities and might have leaked derogatory information to the press. The FBI director concurred with a deputy's recommendation that a "firm and forthright confrontation" be held with the DCI for "attack[ing] the Bureau in a vicious and underhanded manner characterized with sheer dishonesty." Sam Papich, the FBI liaison to CIA, met with McCone on 23 December to discuss a private allegation that the Agency was claiming it had uncovered evidence that Oswald was part of a conspiracy—specifically, that he had received money in Mexico City in September as prepayment for killing John Kennedy. McCone then "had endeavored to leave the impression with certain people that CIA had developed information not known to the Bureau and, in essence, made the Bureau look ridiculous." According to Papich, the DCI became "very visibly incensed and left the impression that he might at any moment ask [me] to leave." McCone then denied that he had talked to any journalist about the assassination and had not been critical of the FBI's handling of the investigation, but that he had told President Johnson about the original report on Oswald in

Mexico City. The encounter with Papich "left [McCone] in an angry mood."¹⁵ (U)

That dispute soon was superseded by recurrent problems over information sharing between the Agency and the Bureau. Not only did "a certain amount of pride of ownership" inhibit CIA-FBI communication, according to McCone, but senior Agency officials took issue with the Bureau's uncoordinated disclosures of information to the public and to the Warren Commission, which became the premier entity investigating the Kennedy assassination. In December, they were particularly concerned that release of the FBI report on the assassination would compromise sensitive CIA surveillance operations against the Soviet embassy in Mexico City by revealing that the Agency knew about Oswald's visit there. In mid-January 1964, Helms asked Hoover to direct his officers not to pass CIA-originated information to the commission without first obtaining clearance and coordination from Langley. Further animosity arose when the two organizations reached opposite conclusions about the bona fides of a KGB defector, Yuri Nosenko, who claimed to have seen Oswald's KGB file compiled while the American was in the Soviet Union. A disagreement over CIA's plan to ask defectors it handled to review FBI information was resolved when the Bureau agreed to allow such vetting as long as its own sources were protected and the Agency did not retain any original reports.¹⁶ ~~SECRET~~

Dealing With the Warren Commission (U)

Meanwhile, McCone and CIA had to work out a *modus vivendi* with the Warren Commission. Lyndon Johnson at first opposed creation of a presidential panel to examine the killing.¹⁷ He preferred to let the FBI and Texas law enforcement authorities quietly handle the matter. With rumors

¹⁴ Riebling, 202–3 for examples of CIA-FBI conflict; transcript of McCone-Hoover telephone conversation, 26 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4. ~~SECRET~~

¹⁵ D.J. Brennan memorandum to W.C. Sullivan (both FBI), "Relations with Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)," 23 December 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald FBI FOIA File No. 62-80750-4186; [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Screening the FBI Report on the Oswald Case," 6 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 15959; David Hess, "Documents Reveal FBI-CIA Clash," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 December 1977: 3A; Jeremiah O'Leary and James R. Dickenson, "Assassination Sparked Bitter FBI Quarrels," *Washington Star*, 8 December 1977, A1. (U)

¹⁶ McCone HSCA deposition, 50; [redacted] memorandum to Helms, "Plans for the [Oswald] Investigation," 11 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 48728; Helms memorandum to Hoover, "Assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy," 14 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 278018; Helms memorandum, "Meeting with Chief Justice Warren," 31 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 379972. At the time Oswald was in Mexico City,

CIA, "Comments on Book V, SSC Final Report, *The Investigation of the Assassination of President Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies* (August 1977), tab F, 1–3, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK36, folder 11. ~~SECRET~~

¹⁷ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone untitled memorandum, 24 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; transcripts of Johnson's conversations with Hoover, Joseph Alsop, James Eastland, Abe Fortas, Richard Russell, John McCormack, Charles Halleck, and Gerald Ford on 25, 28, and 29 November 1963, *Taking Charge*, 31–34, 46–47, 49–52, 58–72; Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, 26–27; Thomas, "The Real Cover-Up," 87; Max Holland, "The Key to the Warren Report," *American Heritage* 46, no. 7 (November 1995): 57; Ted Gest and Joseph P. Shapiro, "JFK: The Untold Story of the Warren Commission," *US News and World Report*, 17 August 1992: 28–35; Walter Pincus and George Lardner Jr., "Warren Commission Born Out of Fear," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1993, JFK Assassination clipping file, HIC; Gerald Posner, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*, 404. (U)

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already swirling that some sort of communist, rightwing, or underworld plot was involved, he did not want a lengthy, public inquiry that might produce explosive "revelations" and create pressure on him to act precipitously. At most, he thought, a Texas-based, Texan-run investigative board should be convened.¹⁸ (U)

The president changed his mind as the idea of a blue-ribbon committee caught on with pundits and politicians after Jack Ruby shot Oswald in Dallas police headquarters and inspired fears of a broad conspiracy and questions about the competence of Texas authorities. Now that Oswald would never be brought to trial, Johnson calculated that a presidentially appointed panel of distinguished citizens stood the best chance of preempting potentially demagogic state and congressional probes that might highlight Oswald's links to the Soviets and Cubans, feed other conspiracy theories, or reach contradictory conclusions. "This is a question that has a good many more ramifications than on the surface," the president said, "and we've got to take this out of the arena where they're testifying that Khrushchev and Castro did this and did that and chuck us into a war that can kill 40,000,000 Americans in an hour." The public sentiment that troubled Johnson was reflected in a Gallup poll taken only a week after the assassination; just 29 percent of those surveyed believed Oswald had acted alone. (U)

Accordingly, in Executive Order 11130 issued on 29 November, Johnson announced the formation of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. It was a seven-member, bipartisan board comprising the chief justice of the United States, Earl Warren; two members each from the Senate and the House of Representatives, Richard Russell, John Sherman Cooper, Hale Boggs, and Gerald Ford; and two prominent former government officials, banker-diplomat John McCloy and former DCI Allen Dulles. The president later called them "men who were known to be beyond pressure and above suspicion."

The panel was empowered to conduct a full and independent inquiry and enjoyed a broad national mandate. Its members saw their function as bringing their collective experience and reputations to calm the shaken populace—or, in McCloy's words, to "lay the dust...[and] show the world that America is not a banana republic, where a government can be changed by conspiracy." Other state and federal investigations quickly left the scene.¹⁹ (U)

During the next several months, the commission went about what the chief justice called "a very sad and solemn duty," reviewing reports, requesting information from state and federal agencies, staging reconstructions, receiving testimony, and preparing its findings. In September 1964, it released an 888-page report; two months later it followed up with 26 volumes of supporting transcripts and exhibits. It concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin and found no evidence that he or his killer, Jack Ruby, were part of a domestic or foreign conspiracy. The report—described by the *New York Times* as "comprehensive and convincing," with its facts "exhaustively gathered, independently checked out, and cogently set forth"—had the reassuring effect the White House and the commission had sought. After its release, 87 percent of the respondents to a Gallup poll believed Oswald alone had shot Kennedy.²⁰ (U)

Under McCone's and Helms's direction, CIA supported the Warren Commission in a way that may best be described as passive, reactive, and selective. In early 1965, McCone told the Department of Justice that he had instructed Agency officers "to cooperate fully with the President's Commission and to withhold nothing from its scrutiny," and, through October 1964, CIA provided it with 77 documents and prepared 38 reports of varying lengths in response to its taskings. That cooperation, however, was narrower than those numbers might suggest. CIA produced information only in response to commission requests—most of which concerned the Soviet Union or Oswald's

¹⁸ Johnson displayed his anxiety over conspiracy rumors on the night after the assassination. While watching NBC's television news broadcast, he started talking back to anchormen Chet Huntley and David Brinkley: "Keep talking like that and you'll bring on a revolution just as sure as I'm sitting here." Nancy Dickerson, *Among Those Present*, 96. Senior American diplomats were working to instill calm in both the United States and the Soviet Union. The US ambassador in Moscow, Foy Kohler, warned American leaders about "political repercussions which may develop if undue emphasis is placed on the alleged 'Marxism' of Oswald.... I would hope, if facts permit, we could deal with the assassin as 'madman' with [a] long record of acts reflecting mental unbalance rather than dwell on his professed political convictions." At the same time, Ambassador-at-Large Llewellyn Thompson urged Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan to tone down Soviet rhetoric about reactionary capitalists. Pincus and Lardner, "Warren Commission Born Out of Fear," 2; George Lardner Jr., "Papers Shed New Light on Soviets, Oswald," *Washington Post*, 6 August 1999, JFK Assassination clipping file, HIC. (U)

¹⁹ Executive Order 11130 and White House press release, both dated 29 November 1963, *Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy* (hereafter *Warren Commission Report*), 471–72; Johnson, *Vantage Point*, 26; Grose, 543; Bird, *The Chairman*, 549. (U)

²⁰ Edward Jay Epstein, *Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth*, 46; Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies Within*, 111; Max Holland, "After Thirty Years: Making Sense of the Assassination," *Reviews in American History* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 203. The chief justice offered his own bland rendering of the commission's work in *The Memoirs of Earl Warren*, chap. 11. The 26 volumes of evidentiary material are cited herein as *Warren Commission Hearings*. (U)

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activities while he was outside the United States—and did not volunteer material even if potentially relevant—for example, about Agency plans to assassinate Castro. Helms told the House of Representatives' Select Committee on Assassinations in 1978 that he "was instructed to reply to inquiries from the Warren Commission for information from the Agency. I was not asked to initiate any particular thing." When queried, "[I]n other words, if you weren't asked for it you didn't give it?," Helms replied, "That's right."²¹ (U)

Examining the assassination in a different political climate, the Senate's Church Committee concluded in 1976 that the Agency's inquiry was "deficient" in examining Oswald's contacts with pro-Castro and anti-Castro groups before the assassination, and that senior CIA officials "should have realized" that the Agency's Cuban operations "needed to be considered" by the commission. In 1979, the House assassinations committee levied a similar criticism: "The CIA acted in an exemplary manner in dealing with the Warren Commission regarding its narrow requests for information. In another area, that of Cuban involvement and operations, the CIA's actions might well be described as reluctant."²² (U)

Transactions between the Agency and the commission were channeled through Helms but were conducted between the CI Staff—mainly by Angleton, Rocca, Arthur Dooley, and Thomas Hall—and the commission's counsel or staff. SR Chief Murphy and his counterintelligence deputies, Tennent Bagley and Lee Wigren, also worked with the commission. Requests for information were rarely raised to the DDP or DCI level. Helms met with commission personnel only five times between January and June 1964. This limited degree of high-level communication resulted largely because most of the commissioners, with whom McCone would have dealt for protocol reasons, did not participate

much in the investigation and left most of the work to staffers. No documentary evidence indicates whether McCone ordered the circumscribed approach on his own or at the White House's behest, but DDCI Carter has recalled that McCone said he would "handle the whole [commission] business myself, directly"—including, presumably, establishing, or at least ratifying, the chain of command and degree of responsiveness. Moreover, the DCI shared the administration's interest in avoiding disclosures about covert actions that would circumstantially implicate CIA in conspiracy theories, and possibly lead to calls for a tough US response against the perpetrators of the assassination. If the commission did not know to ask about covert operations against Cuba, he was not going to give them any suggestions about where to look.²³ ~~XX~~

McCone himself had few personal dealings with commission members or staffers before he testified to the panel in mid-May 1964. In December 1963, he discussed with Sen. Russell the Nicaraguan walk-in to the US embassy in Mexico City who proved to be a fabricator. In January 1964, at McCloy's request, he wrote to President Johnson and suggested he encourage Chief Justice Warren to speed up the commission's pace. In April, he gave some commission members and staffers a tour of the facilities at Headquarters where assassination-related information was retrieved, stored, and microfilmed, and he demonstrated the procedures the Agency followed in responding to commission requests. The DCI later said the chief justice seemed "quite satisfied" with what he saw. In May, McCone discussed with Warren and McCloy the need for the commission to refute conspiracy theories even if doing so gave them unwarranted publicity. "If your report doesn't dispose of it [the "second gunman" scenario] point by point, your report is a white-wash," he warned McCloy. Also in May, the DCI discussed his upcoming testimony before the commission with its general counsel, J. Lee Rankin. Rankin told him the subjects

²¹ McCone letter to Nicholas deB. Katzenbach (Deputy Attorney General), 24 February 1965, and CIA memorandum, "List of Unpublished and Partly Published Documents of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy," undated but c. January 1965, MORI doc. nos. 362072 and 398897; CIA memorandum, "Chronological Listing of Items Prepared by SR/CI/Research on the Oswald Case and Delivered to the Warren Commission," 5 May 1965, MORI doc. no. 404227; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 11, 58, 67. (U)

²² *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 6–7; *HSCA Report*, 253. Under the "protection of sources and methods" rubric, CIA eliminated references to its technical operations in Mexico City in material passed to the commission (see DIR 90466, 20 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 299967), and did not mention the correspondence of Oswald and his relatives that it covered or opened under the CI Staff's HTLINGUAL program (see below). (U)

²³ Knoche memorandum about DCI morning staff meeting on 19 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01580R, box 17, folder 345; "CIA Personnel Involved in Oswald Case During Existence of Warren Commission," undated, MORI doc. no. 287755; Rankin letter to McCone, 16 November 1964, MORI doc. no. 272436; Helms untitled memorandum to Rocca about contacts with the Warren Commission, 22 June 1966, MORI doc. no. 507320; author's conversation with Helms, 28 May 1998; ~~XX~~ vol. 1, 71–78; Carter-Knoche OH, 23; Ed Cray, *Chief Justice*, 420–22. ~~XX~~

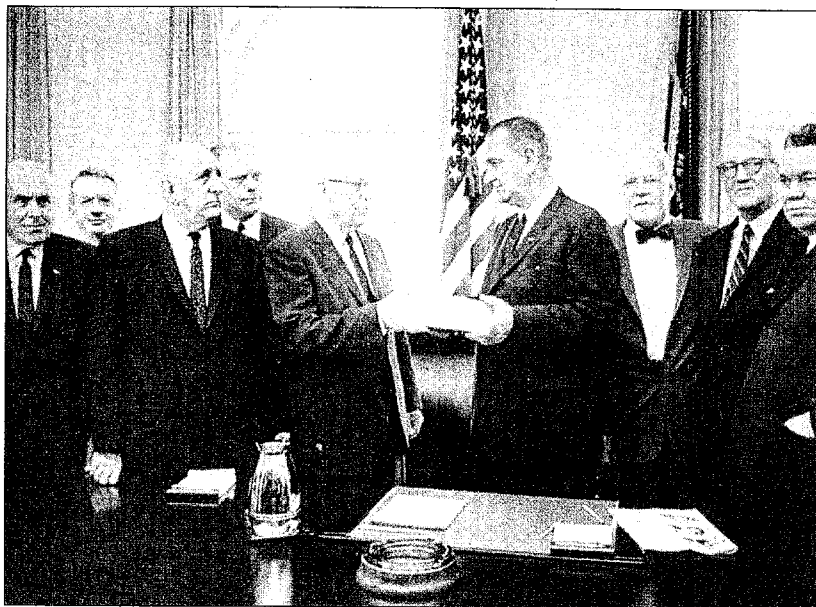
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he would be asked about—mainly “your knowledge about Oswald being an agent or informer...[and] your knowledge of any conspiracy, either domestic or foreign.”²⁴ ~~XX~~

One reason for all this attention to conspiratorialists was that the ideas of one of the earliest of them, Thomas Buchanan, were circulating widely by the time McCone testified to the commission. Buchanan, an expatriate American communist and former reporter for the Washington *Evening Star*, had published articles in the French periodical *l'Express* and produced a book, *Who Killed Kennedy?*, based on them in May 1964. The book's thesis, which anticipated many criticisms of the commission's findings, contended that a second gunman had fired on Kennedy from the Grassy Knoll because the windshield of the presidential car had a small hole in it. Only that scenario, Buchanan argued, would explain the anomalies regarding the bullets' paths, the timing and locations of the wounds on Kennedy and Texas Governor John Connally, and the contradictions between the emergency staff at Parkland Hospital in Dallas and the doctors who performed the autopsy on the president's body at Bethesda Naval Medical Center. USIA and the Department of State worried about the wide circulation Buchanan's assertions had received in the foreign press. A mutual friend of the DCI and the chief justice, Fleur Cowles Montague-Meyers, lived in England and had warned McCone that Buchanan was effectively making his case for a rightwing conspiracy on British radio and television shows. McCone arranged for Warren to talk to her so the chief justice could best position the commission to respond to Buchanan's charges.²⁵ ~~XX~~



The Warren Commission presents its report to President Johnson. (U)

Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

McCone does not appear to have had any explicit, special understanding with Allen Dulles, the commission member who worked closest with CIA, that aided the former DCI in steering the inquiry away from controversial Agency operations. McCone later denied that Dulles was the Intelligence Community's protector on the commission, and the latter declined a suggestion from the panel's head lawyer that he “serve as CIA file reviewer” for the commission. Dulles did, however, advise Agency officers of the questions his fellow commissioners most likely would ask. As the only commission member who knew about the Agency's “executive action” operations, Dulles seems to have taken on this proprietary responsibility himself. (It is not known if he told any commissioners in private about CIA's plots to kill Castro.) He worked through Helms, Rocca, Murphy, and other

²⁴ Transcript of McCone-Russell telephone conversation, 2 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 4; McCone correspondence to Johnson, 9 January 1964, cited in Bird, *The Chairman*, 550; transcript of McCone-Rankin telephone conversation, 12 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 11, 480; *Warren Commission Hearings*, vol. 5, 122; McCone calendars, entry for 16 April 1964; McCone HSCA deposition, 9; transcripts of McCone-Warren and McCone-McCloy telephone conversations, 4 and 18 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6; CIA memorandum, “Records Briefing of Chief Justice Warren,” 16 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 270242. ~~XX~~

²⁵ ~~XX~~ In addition, the Soviet publication *New Times* hyped published critiques of the Warren Commission report and recycled the speculations of sundry conspiracists that appeared in Western media. “JFK's Murder: Sowers of Doubt,” *Newsweek*, 6 April 1964, and “JFK: The Murder and the Myths,” *Time*, 12 June 1964, JFK Assassination clipping file, HIC; ~~XX~~ able to Chiefs of Certain Stations and Bases, Book Dispatch 5847, “Countering Criticism of the Warren Report,” 4 January 1967, MORI doc. no. 325403; Lewis Lapham (CA Staff) memorandum to McCone, “Thomas Buchanan's Articles and Book on the Assassination of President Kennedy,” 16 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 380036; Karamessines memorandum to McCone, “Plans for British and French Publishing Firms to Publish the Thomas Buchanan Articles on Assassination of President Kennedy,” 20 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 270237; “Oswald Called Dupe in a Plot on Kennedy,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1964: C5; transcripts of McCone-Warren and McCone-McCloy telephone conversations, 4 and 18 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6; transcript of McCone meeting with Papich, 19 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 10; ~~XX~~ 29–31, 93–95, 103–21, 144–49; ~~XX~~ 237–38. No available information indicates that McCone ever thought there were two gunmen; cf. Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 616. Most of the best-selling conspiracy books appeared after McCone left CIA, so he did not have to answer their charges officially. ~~XX~~

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Agency officers and, as was the case with other commissioners and staffers, did not need to deal with McCone directly.²⁶ The DCI's calendars and logs of meetings and telephone conversations for the period the commission existed do not show any contacts with Dulles, and McCone recalled talking to Dulles "very infrequently" during that time—perhaps mainly at social functions of the capital elite that they frequently attended. The two men "were not on the best of terms" then, according to Angleton. Their personal relations notwithstanding, McCone and Dulles both wanted to draw the commission's attention away from CIA and encourage endorsement of the FBI's conclusion soon after the assassination that a lone gunman, uninvolved in a conspiracy, had killed John Kennedy. The DCI could rest assured that his predecessor would keep a dutiful watch over Agency equities and work to keep the commission from pursuing provocative lines of investigation, such as lethal anti-Castro covert actions.²⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone and Helms spent about two hours before the commission on 14 May 1964. They answered questions about the Agency's information on Oswald, and evidence of a conspiracy behind the assassination, including Soviet or Cuban involvement. The DCI testified that

[w]e had knowledge of him [Oswald], of course, because of his having gone to the Soviet Union...putting him in a situation where his name would appear

in our name file. However...Lee Harvey Oswald was not an agent, employee, or informant of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Agency never contacted him, interviewed him, talked with him, or received or solicited any reports or information from him, or communicated with him directly or in any other manner. The Agency never furnished him with any funds or money or compensated him directly or indirectly in any fashion, and Lee Harvey Oswald was never associated or connected directly or indirectly in any way whatsoever with the Agency.²⁸ (U)

Although literally true, McCone's statement was incomplete. A former CIA employee, who worked in the Foreign Documents Division of the Soviet component of the DI, told the House assassinations committee in 1978 that in 1962 he reviewed a report on the Minsk electronics plant where Oswald worked while in the Soviet Union. The report, according to the officer, came from CIA's field office and was sourced to a former Marine who had defected and was employed at the plant. The record does not indicate if McCone knew of this report and its sourcing chain and chose not to tell the Warren Commission (presumably to conceal an embarrassing but, in the context of the assassination itself, irrelevant link between the Agency and Oswald); if witting CIA officers did not tell him about it (possibly for the same reasons); or if it was forgotten, not located, or not connected to Oswald.²⁹ ~~XX~~

²⁶ Dulles had several contacts with the Agency soon after the commission was set up. By mid-December 1963, he had asked the DI for a summary of world reaction to the assassination, requested an Agency secretary, sought advice from Lawrence Houston on the selection of the commission's lawyers, and spoken to the Office of Medical Services about Oswald's psychological condition. In January 1964, Dulles—apparently provoked by press criticism that the commission had been slow to get started, according to Angleton—asked CIA to suggest questions to be included in an official letter to the Soviet government. Knoche memorandum about DCI morning staff meeting on 19 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01580R, box 17, folder 345; Howard P. Williams (Warren Commission) memorandum to Rankin, "Meeting with Representatives of CIA, January 14, 1964," MORI doc. no. 48366; Bagley memorandum to Murphy, "CIA Work in Support of the Warren Commission," 16 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 404021; Helms memorandum to Rankin, 21 January 1964, with attached questions for the Soviet government, MORI doc. no. 48370. ~~XX~~

²⁷ McCone HSCA deposition, 19; Angleton HSCA deposition, 97; Rocca untitled memorandum to Helms about Dulles-Rankin correspondence, 23 March 1964, MORI doc. no. 353885; Murphy memorandum to Helms, "Discussions with Mr. Allen W. Dulles on the Oswald Case," 13 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 367363 (the routing slip bears Helms's note, "I have also discussed these matters with Mr. Dulles and along similar lines"); Grose, 544–56, 559–60. ~~XX~~

²⁸ *Warren Commission Hearings*, vol. 5, 120–21, 123, 128–29; "Affidavit of John A. McCone," 18 May 1963, Commission Exhibit 870, *ibid.*, vol. 17, 866. Before the DCI testified to the commission, Agency and Bureau officers reviewed J. Edgar Hoover's testimony and possible statements by McCone to ensure that there were no conflicts between the two directors' positions. CIA officers also prepared a briefing paper for McCone. The paper included guidance on assuring the commission that the Agency had disclosed all information it had on Oswald, and that allegations of CIA ties to Oswald probably were Soviet-sponsored disinformation. The DCI also was advised that, to protect sources and methods, he should not answer on-the-record questions about Oswald's activities in Mexico. The commission's chief counsel and a few staffers already had received such information "on a highly restricted basis." *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 46–49; "Briefing for Presentation to President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy," 14 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 425251; Sullivan memorandum to A. H. Belmont (FBI), "James Angleton...", 13 May 1964, record no. 157-10008-10110, NARA/JFK Assassination Records. By the time he testified, McCone had already had one interview about the assassination—in mid-April with author William Manchester, whom Jacqueline Kennedy had retained to write an account of her husband's death. In February, following accusations from Marguerite Oswald that CIA had "set up [her son] to take the blame" for the assassination, McCone stated publicly that Oswald "was never directly or indirectly connected with CIA." *Washington Evening Star*, 13 February 1964, Oswald clipping file, HIC. (U)

In addition, the Agency had acquired information "from" Oswald without his knowledge through CI Staff's mail-cover and mail-opening program, codenamed HTLINGUAL. As noted in Chapter 12, McCone may not have been aware of that project before the assassination, but insofar as Oswald had been on the target list (because of his former defector status), it would be surprising if the DCI were not told about the program after 22 November. If not, his subordinates deceived him; if he did know about HTLINGUAL reporting on Oswald, he was not being forthright with the commission—presumably to protect an operation that was highly compartmented and, if disclosed, sure to arouse much controversy. Moreover, no information in Oswald's correspondence suggested he was a threat to the president, so the commission had no "need to know" about it.³⁰ (U)

On a possible Soviet or Cuban role in the assassination, McCone told the commission:

I have no information...that would lead me to believe or conclude that a conspiracy existed.... We made an investigation of all developments after the assassination which came to our attention which might possibly have indicated a conspiracy, and we determined after these investigations, which were made promptly and immediately, that we had no evidence to support such an assumption.

McCone said the Agency had investigated Oswald's trip to Mexico City but found no evidence he had a relationship with Soviet intelligence or the Cuban government, or that his travel was related to the assassination. The DCI's statements about Oswald and the KGB were based in part on SR Division's conclusion in December 1963 that Oswald was

not a Soviet assassin. That report stated that although there were "several rather fascinating inconsistencies, loose ends, and unanswered questions about Oswald," his extensive pro-Castro activity and contact with the Soviet embassy in Mexico City violated a longstanding KGB prohibition on its overseas agents having contact with domestic communist parties or Soviet legations. Furthermore, there was no evidence that the KGB had selected and specially trained Oswald for an "executive action" mission, as was its standard practice.³¹ (U)

After the full extent of CIA's regime-change operations in Cuba was revealed during the 1970s, congressional and journalistic attention focused more on what McCone and the Agency had *not* told the Warren Commission—particularly about the plots to kill Castro. To many observers, and some CIA officers as well, these activities clearly seemed relevant to the Kennedy assassination and to the commission's investigation, yet in 1964 Agency officials concluded that they were not. When the House committee asked McCone in 1978 if CIA had withheld from the commission information about the Agency's plots to kill Castro to avoid embarrassment or an international crisis, McCone replied: "I cannot answer that since they (CIA employees knowledgeable of the continuance of such plots) withheld the information from me. I cannot answer that question. I have never been satisfied as to why they withheld the information from me." He said he assumed Dulles, who was DCI when the plots originated, would have told the commission about them. When asked if the Agency had provided the commission with information about covert action, McCone replied in the negative, stating that a "public commission" could not receive such material.³² ~~SECRET~~

³⁰ CIA memorandum, "Response to HSCA Request of 15 August 1978, Item 3," 38ff., MORI doc. no. 425365; CIA memorandum, "HTLINGUAL Items Relating to the OSWALD case," 1 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 339017; Angleton memorandum to Papich, "HUNTER Report #10815," 26 November 1963, MORI doc. no. 364172; T.K. Chalmers [redacted] (manager of HTLINGUAL) memorandum, "Progress Report, 1962-1963," c. April 1964, MORI doc. no. 285779; Newman, 54-56, 220-23, 227-28, 283-87. (U)

³¹ [redacted] memorandum, "Additional Notes and Comments on the Oswald Case," 11 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 340976. The DCI also testified that the Agency had no information that Jack Ruby was connected to pro- or anti-Castro Cubans. (U)

Soon after the commission released its report, two American journalists who often wrote "investigative" articles on intelligence affairs, Robert S. Allen and Paul Scott, accused CIA of deception for not turning over to the commission a "national intelligence estimate warning that it is Kremlin policy to remove from public office by assassination Western officials who actively oppose Soviet policies." Allen and Scott were both right and wrong. The "estimate" actually was an interim study called "Soviet Strategic Executive Action" produced in October 1961. The Agency did not give it to the commission and instead provided a more detailed and more current product, "Soviet Use of Assassination and Kidnapping," dated February 1964. The Office of Security investigated the leak to Allen and Scott and reported to McCone that although the news story was "a serious compromise of a highly sensitive document...damage to clandestine sources and methods would be nominal." In response to an Agency query, a Warren Commission lawyer said "no one [there] was excited about the Allen-Scott piece and to forget it." Robert S. Allen and Paul Scott, "Secret Report Under Wraps," syndicated column in *Northern Virginia Sun*, 22 October 1964; [redacted] (Office of Security) undated memorandum to McCone, "Possible Unauthorized Disclosure (Article by Robert S. Allen and Paul Scott...)," and Rocca memorandum to Helms, "Comment on Allen and Scott Article...," 27 October 1964, with notation on attached routing sheet, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK13, folder 238. (U)

³² HSCA Hearings, vol. 11, 483; McCone HSCA deposition, 10, 11, 16, 49; Scott D. Breckinridge (OIG) memorandum, "McCone Depositions for HSCA," 21 August 1978, MORI doc. no. 306061; Elder memorandum, "Mr. John A. McCone's Deposition to Mr. Robert Genzman, Staff Counsel for the House Select Committee on Assassinations," 22 August 1978, MORI doc. no. 448986. ~~SECRET~~

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McCone's answer was neither frank nor accurate. By the time he testified to the commission in May 1964, he had known about the Mafia plots to kill Castro for nine months, but he chose not to mention them. (As indicated earlier, it is unclear whether he ever knew about the AMLASH assassination operation.) Moreover, McCone's reference to the commission about "an investigation of all developments *after the assassination* which came to our attention which might possibly have indicated a conspiracy" (emphasis added) precluded providing details about *earlier* covert actions that might have seemed pertinent.³³ (U)

McCone judged that he should defer to the DDP's assessment that the plots to kill Castro had no bearing on the Kennedy assassination, and—consistent with the Agency policy of only giving information on request and the "need to know" principle—did not tell the commission about them. In his mind, the evidence showed Oswald was guilty, and the national interest would not be served by fascinating but fruitless examinations of unrelated covert activities. Principles of plausible deniability and compartmentation would be violated; ongoing operations would be compromised; and sensitive sources and methods would be revealed. Publicity about the US government's regime-change efforts in Cuba would give the communists an unprecedented propaganda windfall that they could exploit for years and probably would have evoked strong condemnation from the international community. By withholding information on "executive action," the DCI could preserve Agency equities and avoid leading the Warren Commission toward a false conclusion about Oswald and Cuba.³⁴ (U)

McCone's reasoning fit into the consensus that had quickly developed in the highest levels of the US government after the assassination that the public needed to be convinced that Oswald was the lone gunman and that an international or extremist conspiracy had not killed an

American president. As Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach wrote to presidential assistant Bill Moyers on 26 November:

The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large.... Speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting the thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or (as the Iron Curtain press is saying) a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists.... We need something to head off public speculation or Congressional hearings of the wrong sort.³⁵ (U)

McCone was convinced that neither the Cubans nor the Soviets had sought revenge against John Kennedy, largely because SIGINT had disclosed the stunned reactions of Cuban and Soviet leaders to Kennedy's death. ("They were frightened, and we knew that," a commission staffer remarked afterward.)³⁶ Once he concluded that Oswald had no current connection with Moscow or Havana—and he did not believe the commission needed to know *how* that determination was made—McCone presumably saw no reason to raise what he regarded as peripheral, distracting, and unsettling subjects like plots to kill Castro. (U)

However defensible the DCI's rationale might have seemed in 1964, it came under harsh criticism later. In 1976, the Church Committee concluded that "concern with public reputation...possible bureaucratic failure and embarrassment...the extreme compartmentation of knowledge of sensitive operations...[and] conscious decisions [by senior CIA officials] not to disclose potentially important information" kept the commission from knowing all it should have. According to the House assassinations committee in 1978, the commission "failed to investigate adequately the possibility of a conspiracy to assassinate the President," in part

³³ OIG, "Report on Plots to Assassinate Fidel Castro," MORI doc. no. 334698, 69–70. The Agency personnel assigned by Helms to assist the commission were not witting of the AMLASH operation. Officers of the DDP's Special Affairs Staff who knew of the assassination plots were never in touch with the commission. The House assassinations committee concluded that "the only person who knew of these plots and was in contact with the Warren Commission was Richard Helms." *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 11, 58, 67; *HSCA Report*, 4, 253. (U)

³⁴ Angleton, however, told the House assassinations committee in 1978 that the Intelligence Community "did not have the capabilities" in 1963–64—such as "a code break or a defector"—to determine whether or not Cuba was involved. "Top Spy's Testimony on Murder of JFK," *Newsday*, 20 June 1997, A3. (U)

³⁵ *Church Committee JFK Assassination Report*, 23. Critics of the Warren Commission often have cited Katzenbach's memorandum as proof of a high-level effort, in assassination scholar Max Holland's words, to "put the machinery of government into gear to make the lone-deranged assassin story a convincing one" and reach "a pre-cooked verdict." More plausibly, however, Katzenbach—who has acknowledged that his language was less than artful—"advocated a process that would put rumor and speculation to rest, because [after Oswald's death] a purgative trial had been rendered impossible." Max Holland, "The Docudrama That Is JFK," *Nation* 267, no. 19 (7 December 1998): 28. (U)

³⁶ Holland, "After Thirty Years," 209; Pincus and Lardner, "Warren Commission Born Out of Fear," 1. (U)

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because of the limited way the Agency cooperated with it.³⁷ In the long term, the decision of McCone and Agency leaders in 1964 not to disclose information about CIA's anti-Castro schemes might have done more to undermine the credibility of the commission than anything else that happened while it was conducting its investigation. At the time, however, McCone felt the need for clarity and closure all the more acutely because while the commission was going about its business, CIA and the FBI were feuding over a sensational counterintelligence case whose outcome could have destroyed the consoling sense of finality that the DCI and other US leaders were working so hard to fashion. (U)

The Nosenko Incubus (U)

No counterintelligence matter of McCone's tenure was so fraught with potential for conflict as the defection of KGB officer Yuri Nosenko in early 1964 and the ensuing controversy over his bona fides. By claiming to know about the KGB's dealings with Oswald, and by extension a Soviet role in the Kennedy assassination, Nosenko became potentially the most important defector in history. The conclusions of several senior operations officers that Nosenko was a disinformation agent led McCone to approve Nosenko's detention and hostile interrogation, beginning a protracted, much-debated, and ultimately futile three-and-a-half-year effort to "break" him. The harsh treatment of the seemingly valuable intelligence source is only explainable by CIA suspicions that Nosenko was lying when he said the Soviets were not involved in killing Kennedy. "That made the Nosenko case so extraordinary and so different from all the others," Richard Helms has said. "Otherwise, we wouldn't have done all the things we ended up doing." Moreover, McCone's relationship with Robert Kennedy assured that the DCI would be responsive to the attorney general's urging that the Agency learn the truth about Nosenko and

Oswald, and perhaps rendered him even more inclined than usual to let the professionals in the DDP do what they thought was necessary to answer the crucial question: Did Moscow order the murder of the president? An affirmative answer could have been a *casus belli* for the United States.³⁸ (U)



When he first contacted CIA in Geneva in June 1962 during a disarmament conference, Nosenko was a mid-level officer in the KGB's Second Chief Directorate, which was responsible for counterintelligence and security. He was the Agency's first source on the structure and personnel of the directorate to have actually worked in it. He provided useful leads about Soviet agent and technical operations against US and British targets inside and outside the Soviet Union, agreed to work as an agent in place, and said he would reestablish contact the next time he was in the West. In late January 1964, Nosenko returned to Geneva and met with CIA officers. When asked if he knew about any Soviet role in the assassination, he claimed to have been the KGB officer assigned to Oswald's case when the American defected to the USSR in 1959. According to Nosenko, the KGB had decided Oswald was unstable and unintelligent and declined to have anything to do with him. Furthermore, Nosenko said, he had participated in Oswald's application for a visa to return to Russia in 1963, and he had been assigned to review Oswald's file after the assassination. If Nosenko was telling the truth, his information would dispel suspicions that Moscow had some part in President Kennedy's murder. Nosenko

³⁷ Church Committee JFK Assassination Report, 7; HSCA Hearings, vol. 11, 67-69. For its part, the commission was deferential and trusting toward CIA. Staffers later said that their impressions of the Agency in 1964 predisposed them to believe it was telling the whole truth. G. Edward White, *Earl Warren: A Public Life*, 198. (U)

³⁸ Mangold, 151-52 citing interview with Helms on 23 May 1989. (U)

Nosenko was not the only communist bloc defector to come to the United States soon after the Kennedy assassination with information about Oswald that seemed to exculpate a US adversary. In early May 1964, a "well-placed" Cuban "in close and prolonged contact with ranking officers" of Castro's intelligence service reported that Oswald had been in touch with Cuban operatives "before, during, and after" he visited the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City in late September and early October 1963. The defector—codenamed AMMUG/1 and described as "very reliable" and "highly sensitive"—did not know specifically whether the Cuban government had used Oswald in any capacity, but his reporting about the surprise with which Castro and Cuban intelligence officers reacted to news of the assassination indicated that Havana was not involved in it. CIA passed on the defector's information to the Warren Commission in mid-May. A commission staffer remarked that the panel "was winding up its investigation" and "saw no need to pursue this [Cuban] angle any further." Unlike Nosenko, AMMUG/1 was deemed bona fide—"an operational gold mine," according to Raymond Rocca. CIA blind memorandum, "... Debriefing of Cuban Source...OSWALD Case," 5 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 363778; Helms memorandum to Rankin, "Role of the Cuban Intelligence Service...", 15 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 426655; Harold F. Swanson (WH Division) memorandum to Rocca, "...Debriefing of AMMUG-1...", MORI doc. no. 515131; Dooley memorandum to Rocca, "Lee Harvey OSWALD," 19 June 1964, MORI doc. no. 470087; Swanson memorandum to Director of Security, "AMMUG-1," 23 June 1964, MORI doc. no. 515150; Rocca memorandum to Helms, "AMMUG/1 Information on Lee Harvey OSWALD," 11 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 377826. (U)

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also told his Agency contacts that he wanted to defect. In early February 1964, after he said he had been recalled to Moscow, he was exfiltrated to West Germany. A week after his arrival, McCone ordered Nosenko brought to Washington as soon as possible because the Soviets were publicizing the case. At the time, Nosenko was the highest-ranking KGB officer to fall into CIA's hands.³⁹

Between Nosenko's two encounters with CIA, however, serious doubts about his bona fides had arisen in SR Division and CI Staff and extensive questioning following his defection seemed to support those suspicions.⁴⁰ Some of Nosenko's leads could be regarded as "giveaways" or "feed material" because CIA and the FBI already knew about them or because the cases were inactive or low-grade; Nosenko gave inconsistent or inaccurate descriptions of his personal history; anomalies in his information about the KGB were identified; he provided what seemed to be "pat" information on subjects he had no reason to know about, while claiming to be unfamiliar with topics he should have known about; and he did not show what was regarded as a defector's "normal" concern for his family and his future.⁴¹ His contention that Soviet intelligence had had no operational interest in Oswald seemed implausible, considering the American had been stationed at an airbase in Japan involved in U-2 missions. Oswald's comfortable living conditions in Minsk, his marriage to the niece of a Soviet army intelligence officer, and the circumstances of his return to the United States could be interpreted as suggesting that he had ties to the KGB. None of Nosenko's information about Oswald and the KGB could be confirmed independently; nor would Nosenko, a counterintelligence officer, necessarily be able to say without reservation whether the KGB's for-

eign intelligence component had or had not recruited a particular individual. Also, it appeared too serendipitous that of all the thousands of KGB officers in the world, one who had had direct contact with the Oswald case three separate times would seek to defect so soon after the assassination with information exonerating Moscow.~~XX~~

Perhaps the most important factor in the Agency's thinking was the claim of an earlier defector, Anatoliy Golitsyn, that Moscow would send provocateurs to discredit him and divert attention from the search for moles inside CIA and other Western services. Golitsyn had labeled Nosenko as a disinformation agent in 1962, and James Angleton, David Murphy, and Nosenko's case officer, Tennent Bagley—who at first thought Nosenko was genuine—agreed. Nosenko's reappearance 19 months later had potentially monumental consequences. With the United States still suffering from a national trauma, the Warren Commission inquiry underway, and the Cuban missile crisis barely a year old, the Agency had to determine whether the KGB had dispatched a false defector to hide the fact that Oswald was a Soviet-sponsored killer. As Helms testified in 1978, "[i]f it were shown that Oswald was...acting as a Soviet agent when he shot President Kennedy, the consequences to the United States...and...to the world, would have been staggering."~~XX~~

McCone's deputies kept him apprised of the Nosenko case from the day in early February 1964 when the KGB officer said he had been recalled to Moscow.⁴² The DCI, in turn, passed on news of developments to the White House—especially to Robert Kennedy, who, according to Helms, was the driving force outside the Agency behind the decisions to extract the truth from Nosenko. From the first,

³⁹ Murphy memorandum to Helms, "OSWALD Case," 28 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 404019; Angleton memorandum to Hoover, "Yuri Ivanovich NOSENKO, Espionage—Russia," 28 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 367167; FBI memorandum, Special Agent in Charge/Washington Field Office to Director, "Lee Harvey Oswald," 4 March 1964 Nosenko FBI FOIA File No. 65-68530, section 2. CIA CIC Job 94-01306R, box 4, contains several key Agency and Bureau documents about Nosenko: John Hart (formerly SR Division), "The Monster Plot: Counterintelligence in the Case of Yuriy Ivanovich Nosenko"; [redacted] "Nosenko and [redacted] An Examination of the [redacted] Case against Yuriy Nosenko"; [redacted] "Why Nosenko Is a Plant—and why It Matters"; and FBI, "Norman" (one of the Bureau's codenames for Nosenko). [redacted] later abridged his so-called "thousand pager" (it actually was around 900); the shorter version was circulated internally in February 1968 as "The Examination of the Bona Fides of a KGB Defector: Yuriy I. Nosenko," MORI doc. no. 306324. HSCA Hearings, vol. 2, 487–536, and vol. 12, 475–644, contain much information on Nosenko derived from the House assassination committee's inquiry into his case. See also [redacted] memorandum, "NOSENKO Case," 14 January 1969, DDO Files, Job 89-00395R, box 4, folder 75; and [redacted] vol. 2, 353–56. For published accounts of Nosenko's defection, see the Appendix on Sources.~~XX~~

⁴⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Hart, "Monster Plot," 13–16, 199; [redacted] memorandum to Sullivan, "Yuri Nosenko," 11 February 1964, D.E. Moore (FBI) memorandum to Sullivan, "Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko," 14 February 1964, CIA memorandum, "SAMMY: Conclusions and Recommendations," 17 February 1964 (SAMMY was the FBI's first codename for Nosenko), FBI Special Agent in Charge/Washington Field Office to Hoover, "Lee Harvey Oswald," 4 March 1964, Sullivan memorandum to Belmont, "Yuri Nosenko, Espionage," 2 April 1964, Nosenko FBI FOIA File, sections 1 and 6; HSCA Hearings, vol. 4, 21.~~XX~~

⁴¹ Statistically, at least, the value of Nosenko's information appeared questionable at first. A tally of the leads he provided, compiled in the spring of 1964, showed that out of 157 cases (63 concerning US citizens and 94 involving foreigners), 104 (52 in each category) were already known or suspected, unproductive or not yet active, lacked access to classified information, or could not be investigated because Nosenko's knowledge was vague or ambiguous. Nosenko FBI FOIA File, section 5. (U)

⁴² McCone had no role in authorizing any operational or compensation arrangements for Nosenko after the Russian's first contact with CIA in 1962. Otherwise, the record does not indicate what, if anything, McCone knew about the case before 1964.~~XX~~

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McCone received essentially all evaluations of Nosenko's bona fides from skeptics, including ADDP Thomas Karamessines, Angleton, Murphy, and Golitsyn, but he appears initially to have tried to keep an open mind. Possibly he took early warnings about Nosenko as a standard caveat about any defector. In mid-February, he told Rusk he was inclined to believe Nosenko. After hearing about the results of further questioning, however, the DCI told the president that "the Soviet's performance and action were so different from any other defector case that our suspicions had been aroused."⁴³ ~~X~~

The breadth of Golitsyn's information about Soviet intelligence activities and CIA officers' faith in it added to Nosenko's difficulty in establishing his veracity. McCone, Helms, Angleton, and SR Division managers thought the balance weighed heavily in Golitsyn's favor. Even without his information about Oswald, Nosenko would have had a hard time proving himself. Contributing to McCone's uncertainty was Hoover's conclusion—based largely on a trusted KGB source (codenamed FEDORA) the FBI had at the United Nations and the Bureau's own interviews with Nosenko—by early March that Nosenko's information was "valid and valuable" and that he was a genuine defector. Angleton, however, thought FEDORA was a plant because he corroborated supposedly inaccurate information from Nosenko and therefore must be part of the same deception. At about the same time, in early March, McCone and CIA felt pressure from the Warren Commission after Hoover unilaterally revealed to the commission what the defector had said about Oswald—which supported the Bureau's conclusion that he was a deranged killer acting alone. With the DCI's permission, Helms told the commission that the Agency had serious reservations about Nosenko and asked it to "await further developments."⁴⁴ ~~X~~

To resolve the uncertainty about Nosenko, McCone in early April 1964 accepted the recommendations of Helms, Angleton, and Murphy that the defector be confined and interrogated until broken. (Agency officers had suspended informational debriefings of Nosenko a month before.) CIA

detained Nosenko under the terms of an "exclusion and parole" agreement with the Department of Justice executed in 1955. The agreement gave the Agency authority to exercise over defectors "control of a kind and degree it believes consistent with the internal security needs of the United States." The documentary record does not indicate what McCone knew about the austere conditions of Nosenko's year-long detention at an Agency safehouse ~~X~~. (Twelve of the 16 months of the Russian's confinement there were during McCone's tenure.) Helms does not recall that McCone ever asked for details of the inquiry, and the DCI does not appear to have been fully aware of much of the dubious logic and inappropriate ~~X~~ procedures upon which the case against Nosenko rested. Assured by his senior operations and legal officers that the Agency was handling Nosenko lawfully and in ways they believed stood the best chance of revealing the truth, McCone let the hostile interrogation run its course. There is no reason to doubt that he would have accepted then the argument Helms made to congressional investigators a decade-and-a-half later to justify the severe treatment of Nosenko:

[T]his became one of the most difficult issues...that the Agency had ever faced. Here a President of the United States had been murdered and a man had come from the Soviet Union, an acknowledged Soviet intelligence officer, and said his intelligence service had never been in touch with this man [Oswald] and knew nothing about him. This strained credulity at the time. It strains it to this day.... You are damned if you hold a fellow too long and treat him badly...and you are damned the other way if you have not dug his teeth out to find out what he knows about Oswald.⁴⁵ ~~X~~

McCone soon received further impressions about Nosenko from the FBI and Golitsyn that reinforced his approval for having the defector interrogated. In May 1964, the FBI's liaison officer to the Agency, Sam Papich, told McCone that some Bureau officials "are very much concerned and recognize that [Nosenko] could be a plant." "[H]is story has held

⁴³ Karamessines memorandum about ~~X~~ (Nosenko's first cryptonym; he was later called ~~X~~), 3 February 1964, DDO Records, Job 78-07173A, box 1, folder 2; McCone calendars, entries for 10 and 11 February 1964 showing meetings with Angleton and ~~X~~ transcript of McCone-Golitsyn meeting, 11 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; Mangold, 150 citing interview with Elder on 11 August 1988; Angleton HSCA deposition, 49-50; ~~X~~ Nosenko and ~~X~~ Annex 2, ~~X~~ Chronology," 21; *Rockefeller Commission Report*, 170; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with Secretary Rusk, 11 February 1964...", McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President—20 February 1964—Alone," *ibid.*, box 6, folder 7 ~~X~~

⁴⁴ Hart, "Monster Plot," 24, 198; Riebling, 210-16; Wise, *Molehunt*, 148-53; "Notes for DDCI," 5 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 10; Rankin letter to Helms, 6 March 1964, MORI doc. no. 399794; Angleton memoranda to Hoover, both titled "Sammy," 14 and 16 December 1964, Nosenko FBI FOIA File, section 12; Edward Jay Epstein, *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald*, 19-21, 41-42. ~~X~~

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up—but the cases are peanuts—no real significance. The other leads that he gave us—many of them were known to us.... [The Soviets] have not suffered at all by what he's given us." McCone told Papich that CIA would not decide on Nosenko one way or the other unless the Bureau agreed with its judgment. In June, Golitsyn—after reading files on Nosenko and listening to tapes of his debriefings—reaffirmed his prior assessment that Nosenko was a false defector.⁴⁶ In July, Golitsyn told the DCI that he disputed Nosenko's explanation of GRU asset Pyotr Popov's arrest in 1959. Nosenko said KGB security caught a CIA officer mailing a letter to Popov. Golitsyn insisted, however, that Nosenko's account was intended to divert the Agency from the penetration agent who had tipped off the Soviets.⁴⁷

The Warren Commission's patience with the Agency over Nosenko had worn thin by mid-June, when it asked McCone for a definitive assessment of Nosenko's credibility. McCone had Helms tell Chief Justice Warren that CIA thought Nosenko might be a dispatched agent and to advise the commission that his information should be suppressed. One important concern the Agency had was the embarrassment that would result if the commission's report included material from a source later shown to be a controlled Soviet agent. Warren later told McCone that the commission had accepted CIA's advice. In addition, at least three times in

July, Agency officers (including Helms, Murphy, and Bagley) told the commission that Nosenko might be a KGB plant. Those sessions settled the question; the FBI's debriefings of Nosenko remained closed in the commission's files and did not contribute to its conclusions.⁴⁸

During the last 12 months of McCone's directorship, CIA officers subjected Nosenko to at least 160 hours of hostile interrogation and an untallied amount of what was termed "neutral" questioning. According to Helms, the DCI did not follow the case closely at this stage but expected to be informed of major developments. Otherwise, once the Warren Commission formally concluded that Oswald had acted alone, McCone showed no further interest in pursuing the Nosenko aspect of the assassination.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the case remained unbroken. In January 1965, CIA determined that Nosenko—who had not changed his story about Oswald and the KGB—was being deceptive but still could not ascertain why. When McCone left Langley, the Office of Security had nearly completed preparations for placing Nosenko in a specially built detention facility.

The USIB Executive Committee approved this phase of the Agency's handling of Nosenko, although it was not given details of the defector's treatment. There is no record that

⁴⁵ Hart, "Monster Plot," 199; memorandum from Chief, Operational Support Division to Acting Chief, Support Branch, "Subject: AEFOXTROT," 12 May 1964, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK38, folder 22; [redacted] (Office of Security) memorandum to Special Agent in Charge/District Field Office, "Emergency Instructions Regarding Custody of [redacted]," 10 July 1964, *ibid.*; Nosenko case summary in ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 10, folder 228, tab 5; author's conversation with Helms, 20 May 1998; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 4, 12, 31; Murphy memoranda, "Yuriy I. Nosenko, Briefing of DCI," 2 April 1964, "Discussion with Deputy Attorney General on Nosenko Case," 2 April 1964, and "Discussion with State Department Officials on the Nosenko Case," 6 April 1964, Soviet-Eastern Europe [SE] Division Files, Job 89-00395R, box 4, folder 63; Houston memorandum to Director of Security, "Parole Status of Defectors," OGC 64-0903, 3 April 1964, and Houston memorandum, "Nosenko [sic] Case," 3 April 1964, CIA JFK Assassination Records, box JFK38, folder 22; Immigration and Naturalization Act, Public Law 82-414, Section 212(d)(5), 8 United States Code 1182; Helms testimony before HSCA, 22 September 1978, *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 4, 21; Nicholas P. Stoiaken (Office of Security/Interrogation Research Division) memorandum to Murphy, "NOSENKO, Yuriy Ivanovich," 8 April 1964, MORI doc. no. 286774.

⁴⁶ Golitsyn heard of Nosenko's defection from Angleton just after it occurred, and on 11 February told McCone that he could help evaluate the new arrival if he read the files. McCone concurred, and Nosenko's file was added to others that Golitsyn had started to read the previous November. Golitsyn could protect himself by debunking Nosenko, but it is not evident in the record how much McCone, Helms, Angleton, and others factored that self-interest into their evaluations of the two defectors.

⁴⁷ Transcript of McCone meeting with Papich, 19 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 10; Hart, "Monster Plot," 200; transcript of McCone meeting with Angleton and [redacted], 11 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; "Golitsyn," 36-38; transcript of McCone meeting with [redacted], 16 July 1964, McCone papers, box 7, folder 11. The chronology of Popov's compromise is complicated, but it is fair to say [redacted] first cast suspicion on Popov, who was later found to be carrying the CIA letter. Mismanaged FBI surveillance of Soviet operatives whom Popov had reported, Popov's own poor security practices, and reporting from the KGB's assets in the Vienna police and its agent in MI-6, George Blake, contributed to his compromise. The case is thoroughly recounted in former DDP officer William Hood's book, *Mole*.

⁴⁸ Murphy memorandum to Helms, "Warren Commission Query Regarding Nosenko," 18 June 1964, MORI doc. no. 354911; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record... Talk with Chief Justice Earl Warren," and McCone letter to Warren, both dated 24 June 1962, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Helms memorandum to President Johnson, 22 March 1968, *ibid.*, box 11, folder 5; Wigren memorandum to Murphy, 8 July 1964, MORI doc. no. 277735; Bagley memoranda, both titled "Use of Nosenko Information in Warren Commission Report," 17 and 28 July 1964, and Murphy memorandum to Helms, "Discussion with Mr. Dulles re the Nosenko Information on Oswald," 8 July 1964, MORI doc. nos. 344453, 344452, and 370732; Riebling, 217 citing interview with Helms on 4 February 1992; Epstein, *Legend*, 47-48; Grose, 550-51.

⁴⁹ Hart, "Monster Plot," table following 103.

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McCone knew or asked about the mechanics of this much more grueling (and ultimately fruitless) phase of the investigation.⁵⁰ ~~XX~~

As journalist David Wise pointed out in the late 1970s, there were several permutations to the question of Nosenko's authenticity, most of which were not considered by McCone or any senior Agency officer after the Kennedy assassination.⁵¹ First, as conventional wisdom at CIA ran until the late 1960s, Nosenko could have been a false defector with a false story about Oswald and the KGB. Second, Nosenko might have been a real defector who had made up a story about Oswald to make himself a "bigger catch." The inaccuracies and exaggerations in his story were reevaluated later as consistent with the penchant of defectors to embellish their biographies, access, and knowledge. (U)

Third, Nosenko could have been a genuine defector with accurate information. The FBI believed Nosenko in 1964, and CIA concluded a few years later that his information about Oswald was accurate. Lastly, Nosenko might have been a controlled agent sent to the United States to report truthfully that the Soviets had nothing to do with Oswald or the assassination. Moscow miscalculated, however, in thinking the US government would find that story more believable if it came through clandestine channels from a "defector" with an attractive resumé. (U)

As DCI, McCone never freed himself from the "zero sum" paradigm to which SR Division and CI Staff were wedded: Golitsyn was good, so Nosenko must be bad. The

empirically-minded McCone judged that enough facts existed to support that deceptively simple conclusion. As in other counterintelligence matters—an area in which he did not display much intellectual creativity—he deferred to trusted deputies. In 1978, McCone told the House assassinations committee that he thought Nosenko was bona fide after all. He did not say what led him to that conclusion, but he may have been reflecting the Agency's revised view of Nosenko.⁵² Reliable KGB information shows that both defectors were genuine—an apparently elementary conclusion that intellectual rigidity and bureaucratic obstinacy kept McCone and a significant number of senior Agency officers from reaching.⁵³ ~~XX~~

Loose Ends (U)

In late September 1964, President Johnson appointed McCone to a four-man committee to advise on implementing the Warren Commission's recommendations for improving presidential security. The commission had proposed that an assassination attempt, an assault against, or kidnapping of a president or vice president should constitute a federal crime; that a cabinet-level committee or the NSC assume the responsibility of reviewing and overseeing presidential protection programs; that the FBI and the Secret Service improve their investigative and intelligence capabilities; and that interagency cooperation and information sharing on security matters be promoted. Others on the presidential committee were C. Douglas Dillon, the secretary of the treasury, who served as chairman; Nicholas Katzenbach, the

⁵⁰ [redacted] Wigren untitled memorandum to Murphy about Nosenko's interrogation, 8 July 1964, CIA JFK Assassination Records, Miscellaneous Files, box 8, folder 4; CIA (probably Angleton) memorandum, "Agenda for FBI-CIA Discussion of the Status of NOSENKO and Related Cases," 9 December 1964, Nosenko FBI FOIA File, section 13; Helms memoranda to Director/DIA and Director/Department of State/INR, both titled "Yuriy Ivanovich NOSENKO," both dated 22 January 1965, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 3; Moore memorandum to Sullivan "Sammy, Espionage—Russia," 14 September 1964, and Angleton memorandum to Hoover, "Sammy," 18 September 1964, Nosenko FBI FOIA File, section 11. ~~XX~~

Nosenko was held [redacted] from August 1965 until October 1967, when, at DDCI Rufus Taylor's direction, the Office of Security (OS) took over his case. OS officer Bruce Solie handled the "clean slate" investigation. Using an analytical methodology that tended to explain away inconsistencies and inaccuracies in Nosenko's story—the converse of the approach that SR Division and CI Staff had taken—Solie concluded that Nosenko's detractors had not proven their argument. ("[I]t is not considered that based on all available information a conclusion that Nosenko is or is not a bona fide defector can be incontrovertibly substantiated at this time.") Nosenko was then released under supervision, resettled, compensated, and hired as a contractor. [Bruce Solie,] "Yuri Ivanovich NOSENKO," OS 801441/A, 19 June 1967, MORI doc. no. 306305, quote on 7; Nosenko case summary in ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 10, folder 228; Breckinridge letter to G. Robert Blakey (Chief Counsel, HSCA), 1 September 1978, with attached answers to questions, MORI doc. no. 25880; Robert M. Hathaway and Russell Jack Smith, *Richard Helms As Director of Central Intelligence, 1966–1973*, 107–13; documents in folder "Yuri Nosenko," DCI Files, Job 80M01048A, box 5, folder 9. ~~XX~~

⁵¹ David Wise, "Epstein's Thesis' Hints of KGB Entanglements," *Washington Star*, 23 April 1978: G5. Wise's article was referring to Edward Jay Epstein's book *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald*. (U)

⁵² McCone HSCA deposition, 44. ~~XX~~

⁵³ KGB archivist Vasili Mitrokhin's smuggled material includes damage assessments conducted after Golitsyn and Nosenko defected. Both men reportedly were put on a list of "particularly dangerous traitors" to be "liquidated." Oleg Kalugin claims that he was among the dozens of KGB officers stationed overseas who were ordered home after Nosenko defected. Andrew and Mitrokhin, 184–86, 367–68; Kalugin, 59. (U)

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acting attorney general; and McGeorge Bundy, the president's national security adviser. Each member had an assistant from his agency to do the staff-level work; McCone's aide was DDP officer John Mertz.⁵⁴ (U)

The Dillon Committee met seven times through the fall and winter and held discussions with J. Edgar Hoover, James Rowley, the chief of the Secret Service, and Kermit Gordon, head of the Bureau of the Budget. The DCI attended only four of the meetings but took an active part in the deliberations when he did. He suggested that a presidential assassination statute contain an "informer clause" similar to those in other federal criminal laws; he thought a high-level interdepartmental standing group should be established to periodically review presidential protection; and he regarded surveys of buildings at sites of scheduled presidential visits as "tremendously wasteful" uses of manpower. As when he testified before the Warren Commission, McCone again pressed for federal agencies to make greater use of what was then called "automated data processing" technology to collate information on presidential security. He brushed aside objections that returning Rowley to his previous job as head of the Secret Service's White House detail would cause personal and public relations difficulties. "The best approach would be to select the best available man as Chief of the Secret Service, after which Mr. Rowley would be required to 'fall into line' or otherwise become a casualty." McCone recommended Michael J. Murphy, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, to either replace Rowley or assume a new White House position supervising the service.⁵⁵ (U)

The Dillon Committee reported to President Johnson in late January 1965 and released a version of its findings to the public in early February (as intended, it had completed

its work in time for the next session of Congress to consider its recommendations). Contrary to the Warren Commission, McCone and his fellow members concluded that the Secret Service should retain primary responsibility for presidential protection and remain in the Department of the Treasury. Despite President Johnson's decision not to support any increase in the Secret Service budget—in keeping with his government-wide economy drive—the committee called for a 57 percent increase in service personnel, improved training, and augmented resources. The members also encouraged the White House to seek legislation prohibiting shipments of firearms in interstate commerce except between federally licensed dealers or manufacturers. In other areas, the committee echoed Warren Commission proposals, calling for a federal assassination and kidnapping statute (with an informer rewards provision) covering the president and vice president; expansion of Secret Service agents' investigative and arrest powers; establishment of a cabinet-level group to oversee presidential protection; and improved cooperation among federal agencies and with state and local law enforcement departments. Several of the recommendations that McCone and his fellow committeemen made were soon adopted.⁵⁶ (U)

One of McCone's missions as DCI was to keep CIA out of operational controversies, so it is ironic that, as a private citizen, he later gave information to the House assassinations committee that rekindled charges that the Agency had hidden its supposed clandestine relationship with Oswald. In May 1977, columnist Jack Anderson (citing the committee's files) wrote that Antonio Veciana, in the 1960s a member of the anti-Castro commando group Alpha 66, had told congressional investigators that in Dallas in August 1963, he had met with Oswald and a CIA officer who used the name "Maurice Bishop." Anderson's story, which the Agency

⁵⁴ Department of the Treasury press release, "President's Committee on Warren Report Holds First Meeting," 29 September 1964, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 3, folder 10; Anthony Lewis, "Panel Takes Up Warren Report," *New York Times*, 30 September 1964, Warren Commission clipping file, HS Files, HS/HC-627, Job 84B00389R, box 7, folder 6; transcript of C. Douglas Dillon press conference, 30 September 1964, MORI doc. no. 373518; *Warren Commission Report*, 454–68. (U)

⁵⁵ McCone calendars, entries for September 1964–January 1965 (including a working luncheon with Chief Justice Warren in late November); Gordon Chase (NSC) memorandum, "Meeting on October 13, 1964 of the President's Committee on the Warren Report," 15 October 1964, MORI doc. no. 399844; John Mertz memorandum, "Meeting of President's Committee on the Warren Report, 13 October 1964," MORI doc. no. 340773; Mertz memorandum, "Meeting of the President's Committee on the Warren Report, 24 November 1964," MORI doc. no. 401990; Mertz memorandum, "Meeting of the President's Committee on the Warren Report, 8 December 1964," MORI doc. no. 340762; McCone letter to Dillon, 20 November 1964, NARA/JFK Assassination Records, record no. 176-10020-10002. President Johnson soon scotched the idea of removing Rowley or creating a presidential security overseer, but he did agree to promote the service's director from the General Schedule to the Executive Schedule as part of an overall "upgrade" of the agency. (U)

⁵⁶ Mertz memorandum to McCone, "President's Committee on the Warren Report..." 7 January 1965, MORI doc. no. 336749; "Report of the President's Committee on the Warren Report," 2 February 1965, MORI doc. no. 340760. Later in 1965, Congress passed a law that made assassination or kidnapping of, assault on, or conspiracy to harm the president or vice president a federal crime. The Secret Service's budget for FY 1966 was increased 33 percent from three years before; its complement of agents was expanded 50 percent to 600; and its overall staffing was increased by over half to 920. Serving under the renamed director (the title "chief" was abandoned as archaic) were four new assistant directors, including one in charge of all protective security details, and another responsible for intelligence affairs. Servicing the latter was an overhauled, expanded, and automated research bureau that shared information with CIA, the FBI, and other government entities at all levels. Michael Dorman, *The Secret Service Story*, 253–55; Frederick M. Kaiser, "Presidential Assassinations and Assaults," *PSQ* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 552; Philip H. Melanson, *The Secret Service*, 91. (U)

described in an internal report as “a mixture of some fact and a great deal of fiction,” did not hold up. A review of CIA records found no reference to Maurice (or Morris) Bishop as a true name, pseudonym, or alias; the Agency never supported Alpha 66; and Veciana was registered as a contact of the US Army, not the Agency.⁵⁷ (U)

The House committee picked up the Bishop “lead” and questioned McCone about it in August 1978. McCone recalled a “Maurice Bishop” and believed the man was an Agency employee, but did not know where he worked or what his duties were. CIA management became concerned that the former DCI’s statement, even though in context offhand and imprecise, would call the Agency’s credibility into question. Scott Breckinridge of the Office of Legislative Counsel met with McCone in early October and brought along photographs of all past and present CIA employees with the surname of Bishop. After hearing that the Agency had no record of a Maurice or Morris Bishop, McCone declined to look at the photographs and said he must have been mistaken when he gave his deposition. He said that the name had come up along with a dozen or so others after five hours of questioning and that although Maurice Bishop “rang a bell” with him, he might have been thinking about someone else. Breckinridge informed the House committee’s chief counsel, G. Robert Blakey, in mid-October that “Mr. McCone withdraws his statements on this point.” Nei-

ther the identity, nor even the existence, of “Maurice Bishop” has ever been established.⁵⁸ (U)

A Conspiracy in the National Interest? (U)

Although criticism of the Warren Commission intensified and conspiracy theories proliferated through the 1960s and 1970s, McCone did not alter his view about Oswald’s guilt over the years. He told the House assassinations committee in 1978 that he knew of no evidence that would tie Oswald to the KGB, Cuba, or CIA. Had a hostile country been involved, he said, it would have provided Kennedy’s killer with an “escape hatch”—for example, a visa such as Oswald had tried to get from the Soviets and Cubans in September 1963. When asked about Jack Ruby’s possible role as an “eraser” sent to “rub out” Oswald, McCone replied that the circumstances surrounding that second murder “were so bizarre and unpredictable that it was impossible to detect a rational plot.” Besides Nosenko’s bona fides, the only matter on which McCone had changed his mind was concealing information about CIA’s involvement in plots to kill Castro. With almost 15 years of hindsight, he said that the Agency should have told the Warren Commission about those schemes. He did not explain why he thought differently then. Possibly he believed that greater candor in 1964 could have helped attenuate the damage

⁵⁷ Jack Anderson and Les Whitten, “Odd CIA Activity in Dallas in 1963,” *Washington Post*, 6 May 1977: C11; George L. Cary (Legislative Counsel) memorandum to DCI Stansfield Turner, “Recent Activities in Dallas, Texas, Concerning the Domestic Contact Division (DCD),” OLC 77-1816, 6 May 1977, MORI doc. no. 384905; John H. Waller (OIG) memorandum to Turner, “Jack Anderson 6 May 1977 Column...,” 10 May 1977, MORI doc. no. 449056; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 12, chap. 3. According to Gaeton Fonzi, the investigator for the House committee who has focused on this Oswald-Bishop-Veciana angle more than any other assassination writer, Bishop was “the secret supervisor and director of all [of] Veciana’s anti-Castro activities...the man who had suggested the founding of Alpha 66 and guided its overall strategy. Bishop not only directed the assassination attempt on Castro in Cuba in October 1961, he also engineered the plan to kill Castro in Chile in 1971. Bishop had the connections to pull strings with the US government and get the financial support needed.... [He and Veciana] worked together for thirteen years.” Fonzi, *The Last Investigation*, 125. The only persons named either Morris or Maurice Bishop in CIA files were, respectively,

and the leader of a radical political party in the country of Grenada. Scott Breckinridge letter to Blakey, 8 September 1978, MORI doc. no. 449113. Breckinridge, of the Office of Legislative Counsel, speculated to a House investigator that “Bishop” could be a representative of the US Army. Breckinridge memorandum, “Discussion with HSCA Investigator on Maurice (Morris) Bishop,” OLC 78-5300/1, 6 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 449056. As described in Chapter 6 of this work, CIA supported several Cuban exile groups working to remove Castro from power, but Alpha 66 was not among them. (U)

⁵⁸ Blakey letter to Breckinridge, 16 August 1978, MORI doc. no. 387344; Breckinridge memorandum, “Morris Bishop,” OLC 78-5307, 20 September 1978, MORI doc. no. 344570; Robert W. Gambino (OS) memorandum to Breckinridge, “Agency Employee with the Surname of Bishop,” OS 8 2678/A, 29 September 1978, MORI doc. no. 305484; Breckinridge letter to Elder, 2 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 501968; Breckinridge memorandum, “Meeting with Former DCI McCone,” OLC 78-5300/2, 9 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 365461; Breckinridge letter to Blakey, 19 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 344565. The House committee also questioned a retired [redacted] about Maurice or Morris Bishop. [redacted] said he recalled a colleague at Headquarters in the early or mid-1960s who went by that alias. When shown the same set of photographs that was prepared for McCone, however, he could not identify the officer. He suggested that the composite sketch that the committee showed him looked like a former chief of his [redacted]. However, [redacted] retired in 1962, and his final posting [redacted] did not bring him into contact with Alpha 66. [redacted] of WH Division also were mentioned as possibly being the real-life “Bishop”—but no positive identification has ever been made. The House committee concluded that “it appears reasonable that an association similar to the alleged Maurice Bishop story actually existed...[b]ut whether Veciana’s contact was really named Maurice Bishop, or if he was, whether he did all of the things Veciana claims, and if so, with which US intelligence agency he was associated, could not be determined.” *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, chap. 3 (quote on 52); Breckinridge memorandum, “Meeting with [redacted] OLC 78-4078/3, 19 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 300195; Breckinridge memorandum, [redacted] OLC 78-4078/4, 19 October 1978, MORI doc. no. 305487; Fonzi, 408. The Bishop business was resurrected on NBC’s television news magazine program, *Inside Edition*, on 5 February 1992, which divulged some of the contents of the House committee’s theretofore secret files—including McCone’s statements. (U)

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that the Agency's reputation suffered during the "time of troubles" in the 1970s.⁵⁹ (U)

Despite the prominence that many conspiratorialists have given to CIA in their speculations about who killed President Kennedy and who has concealed "the truth," they do not accuse McCone of participating in any murder plot or coverup. Even the most fervent critics of the "lone gunman" and "single bullet" theories who posit Agency responsibility for the assassination blame rogue operatives below the senior executive echelon. At most, McCone has been accused of concealing inconvenient or embarrassing facts about CIA's clandestine activities or contacts that might lend credence to theories that Cuba or the Mafia were behind Kennedy's death, or that the Agency had a secret relationship with Oswald.⁶⁰ (U)

McCone did have a place in a "benign cover-up," or what also has been termed "a process designed more to control

information than to elicit and expose it."⁶¹ The protective response by McCone and other US government officials was inherent in the conflict between the Warren Commission's stated purpose—ascertaining the facts of the assassination—and implied in its mission—defending the nation's security by dispelling unfounded rumors that could lead to destructive international conflict. The DCI was complicit in keeping incendiary and diversionary issues off the commission's agenda and focusing it on what the Agency believed at the time was the "best truth": that Lee Harvey Oswald, for as yet undetermined motives, had acted alone in killing John Kennedy.⁶² Max Holland, one of the most fairminded scholars of these events, has concluded that "if the word 'conspiracy' must be uttered in the same breath as 'Kennedy assassination,' the only one that existed was the conspiracy to kill Castro and then keep that effort secret after November 22nd."⁶³ In that sense—and that sense alone—McCone may be regarded as a "co-conspirator" in the JFK assassination "cover-up." (U)

⁵⁹ McCone HSCA deposition, 13–14; Elder memorandum, "Mr. John A. McCone's Deposition to Mr. Robert Genzman, Staff Counsel for the House Select Committee on Assassinations," 22 August 1978, MORI doc. no. 448986; Breckinridge memorandum, "McCone Depositions for HSCA," 21 August 1978, MORI doc. no. 306061. (U)

⁶⁰ See the Appendix on Sources for a discussion of this literature. (U)

⁶¹ Pincus and Lardner, "Warren Commission Born Out of Fear," 1. (U)

⁶² Such reasoning might explain McCone's request to the Department of Justice in January 1965 that it not exempt the 77 documents the Agency provided to the Warren Commission from the 75-year disclosure period mandated for investigative agencies. He argued that "national security outweighs any other consideration" and that the documents should be withheld for the full period. Katzenbach letter to McCone, 8 February 1965, and McCone letter to Katzenbach, 24 February 1965, MORI doc. nos. 404279 and 363957. (U)

⁶³ Holland, "After Thirty Years," 203. (U)

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Working With a New Boss (I): McCone, LBJ, and Vietnam (U)

On the morning of 23 November 1963, John McCone directed Executive Assistant Walter Elder to tell President Lyndon Johnson's secretary that the DCI would be at the White House at 0900 to give the scheduled intelligence briefing to the president.¹ McCone did not routinely participate in this activity, but he wanted to establish rapport with Johnson, whom he did not know well, and impress upon him CIA's indispensable role in providing information and analysis to the White House. (S)

The DCI and R. Jack Smith, director of OCI, met Johnson as he came into McGeorge Bundy's office at about 0915. For the next 15 minutes, surrounded by clattering typewriters, ringing telephones, and a din of voices, they exchanged compliments and expressions of support, after which the DCI, according to Johnson, "led me on a tour of the troubled globe," went over the *President's Intelligence Checklist*, and answered a few questions. McCone recalled that the president's mood "was one of deep distress over the tragedy, and grave concern over how to get his arms around the problems that confronted him, [and] some concern about how to properly handle the men in the organization whose competence he recognized but also whose allegiance was to President Kennedy." Smith remembered that the president's mind soon began to wander. "Beside the compact, trim McCone, [Johnson] looked massive, rumped and worried. He had no interest whatever in being briefed, and after some inconsequential chatting, he turned back into Bundy's office. We had no way of knowing it, but we had just witnessed a preview of McCone's future relationship with Lyndon Johnson."² (S)

Adjusting Personal and Bureaucratic Relationships (U)

McCone had worked with Lyndon Johnson only sporadically in the past. They had first met in the late 1940s while

McCone was on the Air Policy Commission and serving as a special assistant to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. At the time, Johnson was in the House of Representatives and, after the 1948 election, in the Senate. While McCone was under secretary of the Air Force during 1950–51, he oversaw Korean War procurement and dealt regularly with Johnson, then the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee's Preparedness Subcommittee. By the time McCone became head of the AEC in 1958, Johnson was majority leader of the Senate and worked on legislation related to atomic energy. McCone did not meet with Johnson as vice president outside of NSC meetings and other White House briefings, and the two men had not talked with each other since several months before President Kennedy's assassination. (U)

Until his sudden elevation to the presidency, Johnson's experience with intelligence was marginal and skewed. He had received a few classified briefings in the Senate as chairman of the Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee and as majority leader, but neither the Kennedy White House, Allen Dulles, nor McCone made much of an effort to keep him informed after he became vice president. Johnson, in turn, distrusted the Agency, believing that it had conspired with his political opponents to deny him the presidential nomination in 1960 and that its principal officers were Kennedy loyalists. He paid little attention to CIA products. As vice president, his office received the *Current Intelligence Bulletin*, a less sensitive daily publication than the *PICL*, which President Kennedy did not want distributed outside his immediate circle of advisers. In any event, Johnson preferred to receive information verbally or through the media, savored the VIP and diplomatic gossip he heard from J. Edgar Hoover, and did not relish delving into estimates and analyses.³ (S)

¹ McCone, [redacted] OH, 1–3, 13–14; Knoche untitled memorandum, 23 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345; McCone calendars, entry for 23 November 1963. (S)

² McCone, [redacted] OH, 17; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson, November 23rd..." McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; Knoche untitled memorandum, 23 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345; Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, 22; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 163; John L. Helgerson, *Getting To Know the President*, 69–70. McCone and Smith did not meet Johnson in the Oval Office because the new president had not yet relocated from his suite in the Executive Office Building. (S)

CHAPTER 15

In the short term at least, McCone had the president's attention.⁴ After their initial encounter, the DCI said he would continue briefing Johnson personally and "will see to it that [he] breaks down the commonly held view that it is somehow 'immoral' for the DCI to be seen publicly performing in such a role." In the two weeks or so after the assassination, McCone visited the White House almost every day, updating the new president on trouble spots around the world and apprising him of covert action and technical collection programs. Privately telling McCone that "he had the greatest confidence in me personally," Johnson asked the DCI not to confine himself to intelligence matters but come to him personally with policy suggestions—specifically mentioning that he was dissatisfied with the advice he was receiving on Vietnam, Cuba, and nuclear issues. ~~X~~



McCone with President Johnson (U) Photo: LBJ Library

Soon after taking office, the president told McCone that he "intended to call upon me for a great many activities which would be different from those of the past." One that Johnson specified, serving as a political emissary to prominent Republicans on domestic economic issues, was old hat to McCone, and he continued to brief and consult Gen. Eisenhower regularly. That the president at first regarded McCone as a trustworthy insider and objective counselor is clearly shown by his request that the DCI help him with some delicate personnel matters, including cabinet, senior policymaker, and ambassadorial appointments. Johnson also used McCone as a source of information about the intentions of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, whose relation-

ship with the president was far from cordial. The DCI recounted for the president some personal talks he had had with the attorney general, including the latter's uncertainty about his role in the new administration.⁵ (Over time, McCone's close relationship with Robert Kennedy would compound the difficulties the DCI was having with the president.) In subsequent meetings in Washington and at the LBJ Ranch, McCone and Johnson discussed non-intelligence subjects such as the federal budget, the US military presence in Europe, and the president's first State of the Union Message. (The DCI—perhaps with his own "overalls-to-riches" success story in mind—suggested that the speech contain some reference to the individual's personal responsibility for poverty and its alleviation.) ~~X~~

All this "face time" with the chief executive soon proved to be a mixed blessing. McCone found himself drawn deeper into affairs that

were peripheral or counterproductive to his mission as head of the Intelligence Community. Scarcely a week after the transition, he complained to his senior deputies that Johnson often tasked him "with matters of no direct relationship to CIA and of possible damage to DCI relationships with SecDef and SecState." As a first step to avoiding these distractions, McCone decided to change procedures for White House briefings, dispensing with daily sessions in lieu of weekly NSC meetings where he would brief on current intelligence only, try to steer clear of policy discussions, and "give the President [the] benefit of give and take with his top advisers."⁶ ~~X~~

³ Helms, 69–70; Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy*, 616; Richard Helms oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 4 April 1969 (hereafter Helms/OH), 8; Knoche untitled memorandum, 23 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01580R, box 17, folder 345; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson, November 23rd...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; Andrew, 309–11, 313–14; Freedman, *U.S. Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat*, 42–43. A few days after the assassination, Johnson called Hoover "my brother and personal friend" and said "I've got more confidence in your judgment than anybody in town." *Taking Charge*, 58. ~~X~~

⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Knoche memorandum about DCI morning meeting on 24 November 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345; McCone memoranda of discussions with the president on 28 and 30 November 1963, 13 and 29 December 1963, and 5 and 6 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folders 6 and 7. ~~X~~

⁵ For details on the Johnson-Kennedy relationship, see Michael W. Schuyler, "Ghosts in the White House: LBJ, RFK, and the Assassination of JFK," *PSQ* 17, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 503–18; Paul R. Henggele, *In His Steps*, 61–64, 73–91, 175ff.; Jeff Shesol, *Mutual Contempt*, and *LBJ versus the Kennedys: Chasing Demons*, the History Channel, 17 November 2003. (U)

⁶ Walter Elder, annex to memorandum about DCI morning meeting on 2 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345; Carter-Knoche OH, 13–14. ~~X~~

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Even with that rationing of contact, McCone wore out his welcome. Although he was purveying highly sensitive information, his access to Johnson diminished as time passed. The DCI misinterpreted the president's predilection for informal policy discussions as an indication that he preferred to receive intelligence information regularly and verbally. Richard Helms recalled, however, that Johnson "finally got bored, closed the door, and that was the end. He just didn't want to do it any more. You couldn't make him do it any more." William Colby, who frequently accompanied the DCI to White House briefings on Vietnam, has recalled that "McCone's pressures for direct access to LBJ aroused the President's protective instincts against being pushed, and he was not impressed with McCone's efforts to dazzle him."⁷

McCone had assessed his principal consumer inaccurately. The president preferred reading short memoranda to listening to formal briefings. The DCI's "crisp, concise sentences, spoken in his usual brisk manner, fell on deaf Johnsonian ears," according to R. Jack Smith. After a professional lifetime of running affairs his way, McCone did not adjust to the fact that he and Johnson operated differently. The DCI, accustomed to a hierarchical corporate environment, was used to listening to prepared staff recommendations at structured meetings and then making a decision, and assumed any chief executive—especially a newcomer to the job—would operate the same way. Instead, the president, steeped in traditional "old boy" politics, preferred to talk over issues casually with friends and associates in relaxed settings and work out a "deal." McCone, according to Walter Elder and Ray Cline, had a much easier time working with the "presidential" Kennedy—the long-range, strategic thinker—than the "congressional" Johnson—the political tactician.⁸ McCone later noted that while Kennedy used to insist on seeing him for a weekly recap and forecast of trouble spots, Johnson only wanted to see him if some intelligence matter warranted immediate attention. Nor did Johnson, after a few months, invite McCone's increasingly dissonant thoughts on policy, preferring to rely on the more compliant (and far more powerful) Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara. R. Jack Smith has written that

[t]he president's chief intelligence officer must have ready access to the president if he is to carry out his mission effectively. Moreover, it must be comfortable access. Both men must feel easy, confident of the other's support.... It cannot be legislated or commanded. It is the product of personal chemistry and compatibility of mind.

Mutual comfort, ease and confidence, and good personal chemistry never characterized McCone's relationship with President Johnson.⁹

McCone and others inside and outside CIA have overstated his lack of access to Johnson, but even if the quantity of contacts remained reasonably high, their quality declined. According to White House records, between 22 November 1963 and 25 April 1965, the DCI met with the president 89 times and spoke to him by telephone 14 times—or more than one direct contact per week. The average was higher under Kennedy, however, and not only did the frequency decline after mid-1964, but McCone increasingly saw Johnson only as a participant in meetings of national security advisers and less often one-on-one.¹⁰

The DCI failed to persuade the president of the value of personal intelligence briefings and by early 1964 was complaining to Bundy about not seeing Johnson. At Bundy's suggestion, McCone raised the subject of access at a private meeting with the president that April (the scheduled topic was Eisenhower, not intelligence). Johnson, presumably forewarned that McCone was "disturbed" at "not seeing very much" of him, replied that he was available anytime; "all [McCone] had to do was call up." McCone said he had tried to do so several times recently without success. Johnson then noted that he had been very busy of late, that the DCI was welcome to bring special matters to his attention, but that he "did not wish to be briefed just for the purpose of being briefed"; he found the *PICL* "perfectly adequate" and went over it carefully. After their meeting, Johnson—probably assuming that McCone had griped to other officials about not getting into the Oval Office—signaled to the DCI that the matter was closed. At an NSC

⁷ Helms, *OH*, 36; Colby, *Lost Victory*, 182.

⁸ McCone admired Johnson's political acumen, however. In an off-the-record discussion with journalist James Reston, he said, "It amuses me, you know, I go out west and he's got this kind of a hayseed reputation. I tell my friends...now listen, this guy's no hick...he's had more experience than any man that's ever been President of the United States." Transcript of conversation with Reston, 9 September 1964, 19, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11.

⁹ Smith, *Unknown CIA*, 163–64; Elder/McAuliffe *OH* 2, 2; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 201; McCone, *OH*, 18.

¹⁰ Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy*, 146; McCone calendars (which list 63 meetings); Helms/McAuliffe *OH*, 3.

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President Johnson reading the new *President's Daily Brief* (U)

Photo: White House

meeting following their talk, the president announced that he had just received a "thorough briefing" from the DCI and then asked if McCone had any intelligence matters to raise with the NSC—implying that those had been the subject of their just-concluded interview. McCone later noted for the record that "my discussion with President Johnson did *not* involve an intelligence briefing" (his emphasis). McCone tried again a few months later, offering to meet with the president at any time to discuss intelligence matters and give him "the full benefit" of Agency expertise. Johnson did not respond. Not until 11 months into Johnson's term did McCone have a private opportunity to discuss purely Agency affairs—organization, budget, personnel—rather than the clandestine activities that supported the administration's diplomatic and military undertakings.¹¹

McCone tried, with more success, to impress Johnson with CIA's analytical contributions by adjusting the format of Agency publications to suit the president's preferences. Johnson probably was disinclined to read the *PICL*—a product tailored for his predecessor who had denied it to

him—and the background-like quality of the first issues prepared for him may have seemed insulting. (He did, however, expect his senior staff to read it.) Moreover, whereas Kennedy preferred to see the presidential publication in the morning, and enjoyed a sprinkling of chattiness and humor in it, Johnson wanted a more sober product to peruse in the evening when he did most of his reading. Getting feedback on the content remained difficult during the transition. Kennedy would jot comments on his copy or call Cline, Smith, or even junior officers to discuss stories that had not appeared in the *PICL*, but obtaining comments from Johnson was practically impossible. After awhile, he tended not to read the publication. A presidential aide told a senior DI officer that "if we [CIA] can't penetrate this sort of wall...we'll just have to try something else." In January 1964, the biweekly *President's Intelligence Review*—a summary of the preceding *PICL*s—premiered at the White House. Johnson's military aide, Gen. C.V. Clifton, said the president—"a painfully slow reader" who "just cannot afford the time to digest a daily book"—thought the *Review* was "very valuable" and wanted it "kept up without change."

He also had NIEs give more attention to alternative, less probable scenarios as well as the outcomes that the community considered most likely.¹²

Later in 1964, McCone and senior DDI officers decided that there was little use in producing a publication that the president read infrequently. The DCI accepted R. Jack Smith's suggestion that the most graceful solution was to stop publishing the *PICL* and prepare a new publication that conformed as much as possible to Johnson's work habits. After the 1964 election, the Agency dropped the *PICL* and the *Review*, and on 1 December, the first issue of the *President's Daily Brief* (*PDB*) arrived at the White House. The president read it, liked the new format, and wanted publication to continue. As Johnson became more deeply involved in foreign affairs—especially tactical developments

¹¹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Breakfast Meeting at the White House—22 April 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 8; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...24 July 1964," *ibid.*, folder 9; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President—22 October 1964," *ibid.*, folder 10; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson...29 Apr. [1964]...", *ibid.*, folder 8.

¹² Helgerson, 74–75; Ranslaab, 422; Cline, *Secrets, Spies and Scholars*, 201; editorial notes in *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 410, 473–74; McCone memorandum to Bundy, "The Anticipation of Foreign Crises," *ibid.*, 438–40.

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in Vietnam—his interest in CIA's daily products grew.

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"Got Lots of Troubles" (U)

"Is it more dangerous," a despondent Lyndon Johnson confided to his senatorial mentor, Richard Russell, in late May 1964, "to let things [in Vietnam] go as they're going now, deteriorating every day...than it would be for us to move in?...I don't see any other way out of it." After only six months in power, the president and many officials in his administration were feeling frustrated over the fact that, as McNamara later wrote, he had "inherited a god-awful mess eminently more dangerous than the one Kennedy had inherited from Eisenhower." During the Kennedy presidency, the number of US military personnel in South Vietnam had grown from 875 to over 16,000, but when Johnson took office, their usefulness seemed doubtful. The junta of South Vietnamese generals that had ousted Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963 was struggling with its new governmental responsibilities, and its members with each other. Counterinsurgency efforts were put on hold. Cronyism, corruption, and incompetence persisted at the high levels of the Saigon regime, which was widely regarded as an American puppet.¹⁴ X

Despite these difficulties, President Johnson pledged to his top Vietnam decisionmakers two days after taking office that "I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went." To Johnson, who felt bound politically to carry on

his predecessor's policy, the alternatives were clear. As he told a reporter, "There's one of three things you can do [about Vietnam].... You can run or you can fight, as we are doin', or you can sit down and agree to neutralize all of it, but nobody's gonna neutralize North Vietnam.... [S]o it really boils down to one or two decisions: gettin' out or gettin' in." His first directive on Vietnam, issued on 26 November 1963, declared his intention to persist. "It remains the central objective of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and government of that country to win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy." He expected consensus among his advisers and demanded that they be as dedicated to this task as he was. "Don't go to bed at night until you have asked yourself, 'Have I done everything I could to further the American effort to assist South Vietnam?'" Privately, though, the president realized the quandary he was in. "I feel like one of those [Texas] catfish," he confided to his press secretary, Bill Moyers. "I feel like I just grabbed a big juicy worm with a right sharp hook in the middle of it."¹⁵ (U)

Different Men, Different Views (U)

McCone devoted more attention to Vietnam than to any other national security issue during the last 18 months of his directorship, and policy disputes over how to fight the war clouded his relationship with Johnson. The conflict's intractability only strengthened the president's determination to defeat the Vietnamese communists without a major military commitment that would derail his domestic policy agenda. This resolve, combined with Johnson's lack of interest in CIA activities, as well as other personal and bureaucratic factors, made McCone's dealings with the White House so difficult that by late summer 1964 he had decided to resign the following year. Meanwhile, during the remainder of his tenure, CIA assisted the US military's expanded role in the clandestine war against North Vietnam and the Viet Cong,

¹⁴ [redacted] Helgeson, 75-77; [redacted] 29; [redacted]

¹⁴ Transcript of Johnson-Russell telephone conversation on 27 May 1964, *Taking Charge*, 363 (including the quote in the section heading); McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 101. Two CIA papers prepared for McCone give a good overview of the postcoup situation: Chester L. Cooper (ONE) memorandum to McCone, "South Vietnam—Where We Stand," 6 December 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 680-84; and [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Various Aspects of the Post-Coup Situation in South Vietnam," 17 December 1963, McCone papers, box 5, folder 5. McCone may also have seen a report from Saigon station, TDCS DB-3/658,497, "Situation Appraisal as of 14 December 1963," 16 December 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 711-13. For references to literature on the Johnson administration and Indo-China, see the Appendix on Sources. X

¹⁵ NSAM No. 273, 26 November 1963, and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting, Executive Office Building...November 24, 1963...", *FRUS*, 1961-1963, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 636-38; Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 99-101. (U)

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and undertook its own covert initiatives with a mixed record of success. (U)

What role McCone and CIA would have in the new administration's policy toward Vietnam was unclear in the beginning. McCone's early contacts with the president on Vietnam were amicable and candid. During the transition, Johnson sought McCone's advice on several sensitive policy and personnel matters related to the issue, such as who could best lead South Vietnam or which US advisers and ambassadors would be best suited for working on the problem. Johnson at first seemed to appreciate McCone's experience and insights, and the DCI was flattered by the presidential solicitations. McCone sensed a difference, however. After a meeting on 24 November 1963, he wrote: "I received...the first 'President Johnson tone' for action as contrasted with the 'Kennedy tone.' Johnson definitely feels that we place too much emphasis on social reforms; he has very little tolerance with our spending so much time being 'do-gooders'...."¹⁶ (U)

Changes that President Johnson made in his administration's foreign policy making processes further diminished McCone's stature. Largely as a bureaucratic gesture, the president instituted an ostensibly more orderly and formal style of decisionmaking than had prevailed in the Kennedy administration. At the same time, however, he tightly controlled a parallel collection of loosely structured arrangements where the "real" decisions were made. Johnson dispensed with the discursive NSC meetings that Kennedy had favored, expected cabinet officers to be fully in charge of their respective policy domains, and elevated the role of the Department of State in framing and executing US foreign policy. Partly to prevent leaks about policy disputes, he used the NSC mainly as a briefing forum and a ratifier of decisions. The Special Group Counterinsurgency, another Kennedy administration creation, met less frequently under

Johnson and did not deal with Vietnam; the full Special Group and a new interagency coordinating committee took over its work.¹⁷ Johnson preferred to address difficult national security issues in more intimate surroundings outside the NSC—ones analogous to the cloakroom manipulations he engaged in as party chief in the Senate. Foremost among these were the Tuesday Lunches that he began hosting in February 1964. Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy were the charter members of that most elite of dining clubs. The president also had a "kitchen cabinet" of colleagues and cronies from Texas and Washington from whom he often sought private counsel.¹⁸ (U)

Overall, these changes emphasized the status of Rusk, McNamara, and Bundy, and reduced McCone's informal avenues of access and influence to the White House. He had good personal relations with Rusk, but he never got along that well with Bundy, and he was still fighting with McNamara over bureaucratic and policy matters. Not surprisingly, the DCI attended only six of the 27 Tuesday Lunches held between late February and late September 1964, when they were suspended for the election campaign. He attended none after they resumed in March 1965.¹⁹ (U)

McCone directly felt Johnson's penchant for hands-on management when the president intruded himself in the selection of a new chief of station in Saigon.²⁰ On 2 December 1963, Johnson wrote to the DCI about a permanent successor to John Richardson, who had been withdrawn but not yet replaced formally. Either bring in a "top-notch man," the president directed McCone, or "promote the man on the spot." He asserted personal control over the appointment, telling the DCI that he awaited a nomination from among the Agency's "best and most experienced." McCone had intended to have Richardson's replacement start the following June, [redacted]

[redacted] but the presi-

¹⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting, Executive Office Building...November 24, 1963..." *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 637. (U)

¹⁷ Established by NSAM No. 280 on 14 February 1964, the Vietnam Coordinating Committee was headed initially by William Sullivan, Rusk's special assistant for Vietnam affairs. *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 26 n. 2, 79-80. (U)

¹⁸ George C. Herring, "The Reluctant Warrior: Lyndon Johnson as Commander in Chief," in David L. Anderson, ed., *Shadow on the White House*, 87-112; Robert Dallek, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam: The Making of a Tragedy," *DH* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 147-62; David M. Barrett, "Secrecy and Openness in Lyndon Johnson's White House: Political Style, Pluralism, and the Presidency," *Review of Politics* 54, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 72-111; Schoenbaum, 412-14; Shapley, 276-78, 283; George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam*, 6-9, 13-14, 22-23; Paul Y. Hammond, *LBJ and the Presidential Management of Foreign Relations*, 7-9; Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*, 5-13, 20-23; David Humphrey, "Tuesday Lunch at the Johnson White House: A Preliminary Assessment," *DH* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 82, 86; Henry F. Graff, *The Tuesday Cabinet*, introduction; Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 148-51; John P. Burke and Fred I. Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, 135; Dean Rusk oral history interview by [redacted] Washington, DC, 28 July 1969, 25, transcript at LBJ Library. (U)

¹⁹ McCone calendars, entries for May-September 1964. Of all his advisers, the president was most impressed with McNamara. "That man with the Stacombs in his hair is the best of the lot," he remarked after the first meeting of the Kennedy cabinet. He also was fond of Rusk, who he boasted "has the compassion of a preacher and the courage of a Georgia cracker. When you're going in with the Marines, he's the kind you want on your side." There are no such presidential encomiums recorded about McCone. Michael H. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War*, 81; Brian Van de Mark, *Into the Quagmire*, 11. (U)

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dent wanted the COS position filled right away. On the recommendation of William Colby, McCone chose Peer de Silva, [redacted] De Silva, an Army counterintelligence officer with the Manhattan Project in World War II, joined the Agency in the early 1950s [redacted]

[redacted] Before he left for Saigon, McCone took him to the White House to meet the president. De Silva recalled McCone's advice to him beforehand:

For God's sake, remember what's been happening here recently—President Kennedy has been assassinated, President Johnson is new in the White House, and the Vietnam problem is getting worse every day. [Ambassador Henry Cabot] Lodge is becoming more and more obstreperous and Johnson wants no more problems out there as there were between Lodge and John Richardson; remember all of these things when we go to the president's office tomorrow. ~~X~~

At their meeting in the Oval Office, President Johnson assured de Silva of his full support but reminded him that one of his primary missions was to get along with Lodge, and not to forget that 1964 was an election year. At the same time, McCone warned Johnson that Lodge "would destroy de Silva if he opposed his assignment, or did not like him, or wished to get rid of him." The president said he would "communicate most emphatically" with the ambassador to prevent that, but McCone replied that Lodge "was absolutely unconscionable in matters of this kind...he had resorted to trickery time and time again during the Eisenhower administration and...never failed to use the newspapers in order to expose an individual or block an action." Johnson averred that he "would exercise the full power of his office to keep Lodge in line," but he would not go so far as



President Johnson's NSC in 1964. McCone is at the far end of the table. (U) Photo: LBJ Library

to remove the ambassador, as McCone wanted, lest he antagonize the Republicans.²¹ ~~X~~

More than anything else, it was CIA's dissent from the administration's policy and its forecasts about Vietnam that estranged McCone from Johnson. McCone summarized their differences in a postretirement interview: "I disagreed with McNamara and others who said they could see the light at the end of the tunnel. We in the CIA didn't see any light at the end of the tunnel, and we had a very pessimistic view which was sharply resented by everyone right up to President Johnson." McCone set the analytical tone for his relationship with Johnson over Vietnam just two days into the new presidency by delivering a bleak assessment at a meeting of the senior Vietnam policy group (the president, Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, Lodge, and Ball). Speaking immediately after Lodge sanguinely described the prospects for the post-Diem regime, McCone reported that the Viet Cong had stepped up activity since the 1 November coup and were preparing to exert severe pressure; that the coup leaders were having trouble organizing a government and

²⁰ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Johnson untitled memorandum to McCone, 2 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961-1963, IV, Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 651; [McCone,] blind memorandum for the president, n.d., EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 8; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...6 December 1963," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President...December 7th[1963]...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 39-41, OIG Files, Job 74B00779R, box 1, folder 2; Peer de Silva, *Sub Rosa: The CIA and the Uses of Intelligence*, 201, 203-4, 206-7; Ahern, *CIA and the Generals*, 13. ~~X~~

Lodge wanted the acting chief, [redacted] promoted to chief and told McCone in no uncertain terms that he neither needed nor wanted a new COS. Peer de Silva, who was present at this discussion during the DCI's December trip to Saigon, recalled that McCone, "[w]earing a tight little smile...mused that unless the ambassador really had cause for refusing my assignment, he, as director, felt he must insist on my assuming the position..." Lodge letter to McCone, 3 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 5; de Silva, 211. ~~X~~

²¹ President Johnson—perhaps with McCone's admonitions about Lodge in mind—told the ambassador that "there must be the most complete understanding and cooperation between you and him [the COS].... I am concerned not only to sustain effective cooperation, but to avoid any mutterings in the press. I look to you all to ensure the complete absence of any backbiting and the establishment and maintenance of a relationship of genuine trust and understanding at all levels." Johnson telegram to Lodge, CAP 63633, 7 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964-68, I, Vietnam 1964*, 3. The prideful Ambassador did not take kindly to being so instructed and responded peevishly to McCone's subsequent request that he protect de Silva's [redacted] "I certainly cannot take responsibility for keeping any man's name out of the press who works for the US government in Vietnam..." In fact the whole arrangement is still somewhat obscure to me...." Embassy Saigon cable to Headquarters, SAIG 3085, 13 December 1963, excerpted in "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 41. ~~X~~

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securing help from civilian officials; and that counterinsurgency operations were at a standstill. The DCI concluded that he could see few reasons for optimism.²² ~~XXXX~~

"McCone's position throughout this period," journalist Thomas Powers has aptly written, "was the one least congenial to Johnson: a strong conviction of the importance of victory, combined with deep pessimism about how we were doing, ending with a claim that only strong measures might recover the situation.... McCone went further than most. In one meeting after another he insisted that if the United States was going in, it had to go in all the way." The president initially respected McCone's frankness and even agreed with the DCI on some points. For example, he likewise thought Lodge "had made a great blunder in disposing of Diem" and said "in the most emphatic way that he felt the appointment of Lodge was a serious mistake," McCone wrote after a private meeting at the White House in late November 1963.²³ ~~XXXX~~

Eventually, Johnson tuned the DCI out, to the detriment of CIA. Indicative of the president's attitude about the Agency was the following story he told at a private dinner (as recounted by Richard Helms):

Let me tell you about these intelligence guys. When I was growing up in Texas, we had a cow named Bessie. I'd go out early and milk her. I'd get her in the stanchion, seat myself and squeeze out a pail of fresh milk. One day I'd worked hard and gotten a full pail of milk, but I wasn't paying attention, and old Bessie swung her shit-smeared tail through that bucket of

milk. Now, you know, that's what these intelligence guys do. You work hard and get a good program or policy going, and they swing a shit-smeared tail through it.²⁴ (U)

Nor did McCone have any personal advocates inside the Johnson White House. He dealt with much the same national security contingent as he had under Kennedy, and his relations with them, strained since the Cuban missile crisis, did not improve. Evidence of the DCI's outsider status was a clever but caustic memorandum that McGeorge Bundy wrote to President Johnson about him in May 1964. Bundy and Clark Clifford, the head of PFIAB, had agreed on "the ideal method of keeping John McCone really happy about the level of his contact with you: Golf." McCone, Bundy wrote, "is an energetic and agreeable golfer," has "more free time" than either Bundy or Clifford, and "can pay his own Burning Tree greens fee."²⁵ (U)

While McCone drifted to the periphery of White House discussions of Vietnam, he retained some authority over war-related intelligence activities as chairman of USIB. Southeast Asia became a preoccupation of USIB during the Johnson presidency, the subject of action once a week on average. McCone and the other board members spent about a third of their time on the issue dealing with special estimates; one fourth on SIGINT and other clandestine intelligence about North Vietnamese violations of the Geneva accords; one fourth on overhead reconnaissance requirements; and one sixth on other special studies handled by USIB committees and subcommittees. The estimates, which McCone scrutinized before signing, were often discussed at

²² G.J.A. O'Toole, *Honorable Treachery*, 491 citing interview with McCone on PBS documentary *Secret Intelligence*, broadcast in 1989; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...South Vietnam Situation," 25 November 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-63, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 635-37; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson, 28 November 1963....," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, 43. ~~XXXX~~

²³ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 165-66; "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with President Johnson, 28 November 1963....," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6. McCone attributed Johnson's antipathy toward Lodge to conflicts they had while in the Senate. ~~XXXX~~

Johnson's abiding bitterness over Diem's ouster was evident more than two years later in taped Oval Office conversations. To Sen. Eugene McCarthy, he paraphrased the coup proponents' words as "He was corrupt and he ought to be killed," and then said, "So we killed him. We all got together and got a goddamn bunch of thugs and assassinated him. Now, we've really had no political stability [in South Vietnam] since then." Right after, he said much the same thing to Maxwell Taylor: "They started out and said, 'We got to kill Diem, because he's no damn good. Let's...knock him off.' And we did.... That's exactly where it [Vietnam's downhill slide] started!" Conversations with McCarthy and Taylor on 1 February 1966, quoted in James Rosen, "What's Hidden in the LBJ Tapes," *Weekly Standard*, 29 September 2003, 12. If Johnson thought that CIA had been the Kennedy administration's "agent" in eliminating Diem, he may well have blamed it—and McCone—for at least some of his problems. (U)

²⁴ Robert M. Gates, "An Opportunity Unfulfilled: The Use and Perceptions of Intelligence at the White House," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1989: 42. (U)

²⁵ Bundy memorandum to the president, 1 May 1964, Memos to the President (McGeorge Bundy), vol. 4, National Security File, LBJ Library. The DCI and the president played golf once, on 24 May 1964. McCone calendars, entry for 24 May 1964. ~~XXXX~~

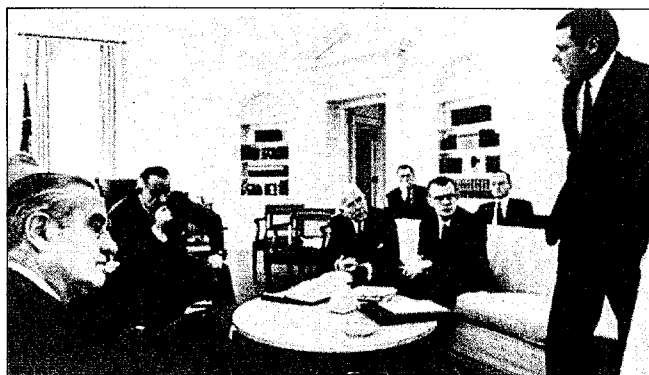
McCone may have brought on some of this ribbing by being oversensitive about his "hall file" in the White House. In January 1964, for example, he discussed with the US government's chief financial officer, Bureau of the Budget director Elmer Staats, the relatively trivial question of outfitting his official car to prevent the driver and security officer from overhearing his confidential conversations. President Johnson already knew about the matter, and McCone worried that someone else in the White House or the Cabinet would seize on it to accuse him of "taking advantage because of a free hand with our budget." The DCI offered to buy the type of vehicle he wanted and donate it to the government, but Staats indicated there were better ways to handle the situation. Transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Staats, 11 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 4. ~~XXXX~~

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principals' and deputies' meetings—particularly those that considered possible consequences of US actions. Although he did not always agree with the bottom-line judgments of the analyses he approved, the DCI did not intervene in the estimative process during 1964–65 (as he had in that one regrettable instance in 1963).²⁶ ~~X~~

The Intelligence Community machinery McCone oversaw as USIB chairman functioned well on the Vietnam issue during the Johnson administration. Requirements were satisfied, and assessments were produced in a timely fashion. BNE and the DI had little apparent impact on policy and strategy decisions, however, because not enough of CIA's senior consumers—most significantly, the president—were listening, or if they were, they did not want to hear what they were being told. Ray Cline has written that “[a]s the Vietnam war became more worrisome, Johnson retreated more and more from orderly reviewing of evidence and systematic consultation.... Intelligence did not have a place at the table”—at least not the sort that McCone brought. Analysts' conclusions clashed with policymakers' geopolitical and ideological conceptions of international communism, their judgments of Moscow's and Beijing's intentions, their anxieties over perceptions of US prestige and power, and, as November 1964 drew near, their interests in securing Johnson's election. Regardless of how well the community performed, the president was still dissatisfied and frustrated with it. With three wire service tickers and three television sets in his office, and copies of the major American daily newspapers nearby, he did not often see what value the intelligence services added to the information mix. “I thought you guys had people everywhere, that you knew everything,” he complained to McCone, only half in jest, “and now you don't even know anything about a raggedy-ass little fourth-rate country. All you have to do is get some Chinese coolies from a San Francisco laundry shop and drop them over there and use them. Get them to drop their answers in a bottle and put the bottle in the Pacific.” The DCI, not known for his sense of humor, did not appreciate the jibe.²⁷ (U)



McCone at a Vietnam policy meeting in the White House (U)
Photo: LBJ Library

Epiphany in South Vietnam (U)

In the last weeks of 1963, a perplexed and troubled President Johnson sought to penetrate the many uncertainties about the new regime in Saigon and its ability to reinvigorate the war against the communists. To this end, he dispatched a factfinding mission in mid-December, headed by McNamara and including McCone, Bundy, William Colby, Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Victor Krulak from the Department of Defense, and William Sullivan from the Department of State. During three busy days of briefings, meetings, working meals, and receptions, the DCI saw the principal figures on the Military Revolutionary Committee that governed South Vietnam—the leader of the coup against Diem, Gen. Duong Van Minh (“Big Minh”); the prime minister; the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, and internal security; the chief of military security; and some senior military commanders, including Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who would lead his own successful coup in January. McCone also met with Ambassador Lodge and MACV head Gen. Paul Harkins and toured parts of the Mekong River delta region southwest of Saigon, where the Viet Cong insurgency had made substantial gains during 1963.²⁸ ~~X~~

Beneath the diplomatic niceties, comforting words, and assurances of support and progress-to-be-made, McCone found the “ground truth” to be disconcerting. A few

²⁶ Lay, vol. 5, 78–79. ~~X~~

²⁷ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 81–83; Cline, *Secrets, Spies, and Scholars*, 201–2; Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 512. (U)

²⁸ Details on McCone's trip are in several meeting memoranda in McCone Papers, box 3, folder 5; “Report by [USIB] Chairman on Trip to South Vietnam,” USIB-M-203, 23 December 1963, ICS Files, Job 82S00096R, box 2, folder 3; and de Silva, 209–11. For accounts by other principals on the trip, see the reports by Krulak, Sullivan, and McNamara in *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 721–35. ~~X~~

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sentences from his report to the president capture his downbeat assessment:

There is no organized government in South Vietnam at this time. The Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) is in control, but strong leadership and administrative procedures are lacking....

The lack of an outstanding individual to lead and absence of administrative experience within the MRC are ominous indicators....

The political stability of the new government under the MRC is subject to serious doubt....

The military government may be an improvement over the Diem-Nhu regime, but this is not as yet established and the future of the war remains in doubt....

The VC [Viet Cong] appeal to the people of South Vietnam on political grounds has been effective.... The ability of the GVN [government of Viet Nam] to reverse this trend remains to be proven....

[T]here are more reasons to doubt the future of the effort under present programs and moderate extensions to existing programs...than there are reasons to be optimistic about the future of our cause in South Vietnam.²⁹ (U)

While on the trip, McCone learned how distorted and incomplete US intelligence reporting had been—particularly that coming through military channels. Policymakers already were aware of problems with the amount, accuracy, and timeliness of intelligence about the Viet Cong, but McCone's concerns were different in degree and kind. "It is abundantly clear," he told the president, "that statistics received over the past year or more from GVN officials and reported by the

US mission on which we gauged the trend of the war were grossly in error." There was "no excuse for the kind of reporting" that had understated difficulties in Long An Province near Saigon, he complained to Lodge. In a letter to Rusk soon after his return, McCone noted that South Vietnamese province and district chiefs had "grossly misinformed" field officers of the MAAG (MACV's forerunner) and the US Observer Mission, and that American civilian and military officials could not audit the reporting.³⁰ ~~XX~~

In these and other remarks, McCone attributed the intelligence failings to US officials' dependence on liaison reporting, not to distortions in American reporting or assessments, or to bad field management of collection. He was aware that the US military had few reliable, independent sources and that it was inclined to "politicize" its reporting and analysis. Moreover, Lodge had been limiting the station's clandestine contacts with South Vietnamese officials. At this time during the policy debate in Washington, and with a new president just installed in office, however, McCone evidently thought it wiser to blame the ousted Diem regime for any intelligence shortcomings rather than MACV and the embassy. Lacking full authority over the entire US intelligence bureaucracy, the DCI's ability to address the inadequacies of the military departments was limited in any event. ~~XX~~

To rectify the situation from CIA's end, McCone proposed dispatching a group of what he called "our 'old South Vietnamese hands'" to independently examine the reporting system, which had failed to show the Saigon government's political weakness in the field.³¹ These veterans from the DI and the DDP, many plucked from distant posts for the assignment, were instructed to spread out over the countryside and reacquaint themselves with official, unilateral, and personal contacts, bypass the normal reporting processes, and discern the true lay of the land. The team (codenamed) cross-checked reports from existing sources and developed new methods to corroborate data. "This has not

²⁹ McCone, "Highlights of Discussions in Saigon, 18–20 December 1963," 21 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 736–38. McNamara, in contrast to his rosy public presentiments, in private made a similarly discouraging evaluation. "The situation is very disturbing," he reported to the president. The new government of Gen. Minh was "indecisive and drifting." "Current trends, unless reversed in the next 2–3 months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely to a Communist-controlled state." "The situation has in fact been deteriorating in the countryside since July to a far greater extent than we realized because of undue dependence on distorted Vietnamese reporting. The Vietcong now control very high proportions of the people in certain key provinces, particularly those south and west of Saigon." McNamara memorandum to President Johnson, 21 December 1963, *ibid.*, 732–33. (U)

³⁰ Hilsman memorandum to Rusk, "Viet-Nam," 5 December 1963, and McCone, "Highlights of Discussions in Saigon, 18–20 December 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, IV, Vietnam, August–December 1963*, 676, 737; Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...Presidential Meeting on Vietnam, 21 December 1963," and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Ambassador Cabot Lodge...[18 December 1963]," 21 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 5; McCone letter to Rusk, 7 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 5–6. McCone's trip did not improve his relations with Lodge, who he told the president was "devious." Despite what Lodge had said about not seeking the Republican nomination for president, McCone did not believe the ambassador would set aside his political ambitions and remain in Saigon. McCone memorandum, "Discussion with the President...December 21, 1963," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6. ~~XX~~

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been CIA's role in the past, as intelligence of this type has come through military channels," McCone wrote the president. "However[,] I believe the next few months are so critical that information covertly developed will complement reporting we receive through the other channels." ~~X~~

At first McCone's idea was not well received at the Pentagon, where McNamara insisted that the survey group's membership be expanded to include officers from the Departments of Defense and State. McCone—recognizing that conflicts in reporting were inevitable, given that progress in the war was not quantifiable—nonetheless pointed out that MACV's excessive optimism and the embassy's pessimism threw reporting out of balance, and that the US military's intelligence assets in the South were inadequate and mismanaged. The JCS also complained about inconsistent and incomplete intelligence, so it went along with the survey team idea with the proviso that it would not develop a separate collection and reporting system. When the CIA representatives submitted their evaluation of field intelligence in mid-February, MACV commander Harkins criticized some of the judgments as too harsh. Such independent assessments, he added, risked "misleading the national decision process by forwarding information not coordinated and cleared with other elements of the US reporting mechanism in Vietnam." Two improvements came out of the survey team exercise: the South Vietnamese national police, [redacted]

[redacted] established prisoner interrogation centers in each province: [redacted]

Another Government, Another Debate (U)

After returning from Saigon, McCone predicted that "another coup or even another thereafter might occur" in

South Vietnam. He was right both times (although he did not forecast either date). On 30 January 1964, after scarcely three feckless months in power, Gen. "Big Minh" was ousted in a bloodless putsch led by Gen. Nguyen Khanh—inaugurating months of leadership instability in Saigon. The US government was aware of the plotting two days before, but Khanh did not tell the embassy of his plan until just before it was executed. According to William Bundy, at the time the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, Khanh's coup "was most definitely not anticipated or stimulated by any American."³² ~~X~~

McCone heard about the coup on the 30th while traveling in Western Europe and was not pleased. He had been decidedly unimpressed with Khanh when they met during the DCI's trip to South Vietnam in June 1962, and nothing he learned about the general afterward made him think differently. Khanh, McCone recalled, was "pretty slick" and left him with "a feeling of insecurity...a very uncertain feeling." In addition, as he learned more about the circumstances surrounding the coup, McCone came to believe that the embassy and MACV had kept information from the Agency. He later wrote that US officials in Saigon ahead of time had "a clear indication that Khanh meant action. Why was it not reported by MACV, Lodge, or CAS [Controlled American Source, a cover name for CIA] not informed?...[W]hy was the COS excluded from the play even after the Lodge reporting telegram went out?" "The remaining scenario of events," McCone concluded, "leaves doubt as to whether we [US intelligence agencies] were alert to the indicators, analyzed them for their effect on US policy and attempted to direct them." In short, the Khanh coup was an intelligence failure through and through.³³ ~~X~~

³¹ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Memorandum of meeting with Joint Chiefs of Staff," 17 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; idem, letter to President Johnson, 23 December 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, IV, *Vietnam, August-December 1963*, 736; idem, memorandum to Rusk, "Subject: Covert Spot Check of Counterinsurgency Reporting in Vietnam," 9 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 4, folder 7; Michael Forrestal (NSC) memorandum to Bundy, "Reporting on the Situation in South Vietnam," 8 January 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-68, I, *Vietnam 1964*, 7-8; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 222; Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 44-45; George W. Allen, *None So Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, 168-73; Colby memorandum, "Meeting on North Viet Nam—7 January 1964," EA Division Files, Job 78-00697R, box 1, folder 7. ~~X~~

³² Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...Presidential Meeting on Vietnam, 21 December 1963," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 5; "Operational Reporting on General Khanh Coup..." early February 1964, and "Chronology of Events Leading up to Coup in Saigon..." 3 February 1964, *ibid.*, folder 6. US officials reacted to Khanh in sharply varied ways. Under Secretary of State Ball called him "one of the best of the generals, both courageous and sophisticated"; Lodge and Harkins considered him "cool, clear-headed, [and] realistic," "a tough, able military leader"; and Colby thought he was perceptive and courageous. On the other hand, Maxwell Taylor depicted Khanh as "a skillful or unscrupulous croupier in the political roulette as played in Saigon," and the Agency's veteran Vietnam officer [redacted] said he was manipulative and chronically dishonest. A more balanced station assessment of March 1964 described Khanh as a moody loner with intelligence and energy. Blair, 108; Marshall Green (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) memorandum to Rusk, "The New Vietnamese Coup," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, I, *Vietnam 1964*, 44; Forrestal untitled memorandum to the president, 30 January 1964, *ibid.*, 43; Ahern, *CIA and the Generals*, 20; Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, 329. ~~X~~

³³ McCone untitled memorandum, 9 March 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8; transcript of McCone interview with Rowland Evans and Stewart Alsop, 3 February 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 2; [redacted] CIA IG Report on Vietnam, 46-49. ~~X~~

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To get objective assessments of the unsettled situation in South Vietnam, McCone had Agency officers conduct two reviews, and took a second trip to the country in March. Executive Director-Comptroller Kirkpatrick and COS de Silva did one of the assessments, and the abovementioned special survey team did the other. De Silva, writing in February, predicted that the "gradual abrading of the popular will to resistance" would destabilize the Saigon government unless countered by South Vietnamese military victories. Kirkpatrick was "shocked by the number of our (CIA) people and of the military, even those whose job is always to say we are winning, who feel that the tide is against us." He added that the Viet Cong's superior intelligence capabilities were a major factor in their success, and that unless communist infiltration into the South from Laos and Cambodia was curtailed, "this entire pacification effort is like trying to mop the floor before turning off the faucet." Around that time, the [] survey team submitted the first of two reports to the DCI. The initial one depicted a scene of general deterioration, with the Viet Cong gaining headway, the South Vietnamese leadership ineffective, and counterinsurgency programs in disarray.³⁴

Soon after receiving the above reports, McCone went to Saigon. Senior administration officials were not enthusiastic about his trip, but McNamara and Taylor already were traveling there, and no good reason could be given why the DCI should not go as well. Moreover, he was not about to let Agency equities go unprotected during a Pentagon VIP tour whose main purpose was to convey Washington's endorsement of Khanh. McCone could not be said to be going with an open mind. A few weeks before, he had commented that the last special estimate dealing with South Vietnam (dated 12 February) was not sufficiently negative, and just before he left he wrote that "the situation is worse now than it was

in December...I am more pessimistic of the future of the American cause in South Vietnam than [before]...."³⁵

Little that McCone saw or heard there during six days in early March would have changed his viewpoint. On the Vietnamese side, he met with Gen. Khanh and his military lieutenants; Gen. Minh, now the figurehead chief of state; and the vice prime ministers or ministers in charge of foreign affairs, economics, interior affairs, and cultural and social affairs. He did not receive what he thought were convincing answers to questions about increased enemy activity, or about the Saigon government's abilities to conduct successful "clear and hold" operations and to win the allegiance of the estimated 50 percent of the population that did not care who won the war. A report from the [] team about intelligence and operational problems was notably discouraging in that regard. Perhaps the bluntest conclusion the DCI heard came from the Australian colonel who headed his country's advisory team: "We are being asked the wrong question. When someone asks 'can the war be won,' the answer is 'certainly, yes'; but if someone asks 'will the war be won,' the answer is 'very probably, no.'"³⁶

When the Pentagon party returned, McNamara submitted to the president a trip report that included a dozen policy recommendations founded on the premises that South Vietnam was too important to let fall to the communists and that current difficulties could be overcome. Besides increases in nonmilitary aid and military materiel, McNamara proposed that the US government underwrite an expansion of the South Vietnamese army and the creation of a counter guerrilla force, authorize Saigon's forces to engage in "hot pursuit" operations into Laos, and have the South Vietnamese air force prepared to launch retaliatory air strikes across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on 72 hours notice and full-scale air raids (along with US aircraft) on

³⁴ Attachment to Elder memorandum to Rusk, "Appraisal of the Conduct of the War in Vietnam," 10 February 1964, and Helms memorandum to Rusk, 18 February 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 65-66, 84-86. Also around this time, BNE produced a special estimate containing the dire conclusion that "unless there is a marked improvement in the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese government and armed forces, South Vietnam has at best an even chance of withstanding the insurgency menace during the next few weeks or months." SNIE 50-64, "Short-Term Prospects in Southeast Asia," 12 February 1964, 1.

³⁵ Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting...13 February [1964]," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 8; Carter untitled memorandum, 15 February 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 16; McCone memorandum, USIB-M-311, 12 February 1964, ICS Files, Job 82S00096R, box 2, folder 4; McCone, "Memorandum on Vietnam," 3 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 122. President Johnson told the Joint Chiefs on 4 March that "we must make General Khanh 'our boy' and proclaim the fact to all and sundry. [The President] wants to see Khanh in the newspapers with McNamara and Taylor holding up his arms." Taylor, "Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the President...March 4, 1964," *ibid.*, 129. The DCI's above-cited memorandum on Vietnam included other negative judgments such as: "the prospects for a strong government are not bright.... The problem of reversing the [downward military] trend is formidable.... [T]here has been submersion of bad news and an overstatement of good news.... [O]ur military operations in South Vietnam have not been as successful as we assumed up to last December. I think the whole concept has to be reviewed." McCone, "Memorandum on Vietnam," 3 March 1964, *ibid.*, 121-24.

³⁶ McCone untitled memorandum, 9 March 1964, "Notes on briefing at MACV Conference Room on 9 March [1964]," and "Notes on Meeting at US Embassy...9 March 1964..." McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8; [] "Memorandum of Conversation...Meeting with Colonel Francis P. Serong, 11 March 1964..." *ibid.*

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30 days notice. McNamara circulated a draft of the report among the trip participants. Hoping for consensus but anticipating disagreement, he allowed dissenters to take footnotes.³⁷ (U)

McCone took five. In the last—the longest and most important—he concurred with McNamara's proposals but called them "too little too late." He recommended instead a six-point program that would have significantly escalated the level of armed conflict and US involvement in Southeast Asia. For example, whereas McNamara's carefully hedged program of Cambodian border control emphasized that operations across the border should depend on the state of relations with Cambodia, McCone recommended that Gen. Khanh insist upon an immediate meeting with Prince Sihanouk to develop a joint border clearing program. If Sihanouk should refuse, McCone stated that Khanh, with US assistance, should "stop all traffic on the Mekong River to and from Cambodia, destroy Viet Cong installations in Cambodia, and authorize ARVN to engage in hot pursuit across the Cambodian border." In addition, McCone recommended that Nationalist Chinese troops be introduced into the delta—a proposal so unacceptable that Taylor warned that if it were put to the Joint Chiefs, they would unanimously oppose it.³⁸

President Johnson did not want policy feuds among his advisers to be publicized, so at a meeting of the Vietnam principals to discuss McNamara's draft, he told the secretary of defense and the DCI that he hoped they could settle their differences. He deplored the fact that if such a split arose at an NSC meeting with a few dozen participants, it would immediately leak to the press. McNamara stated that his and McCone's judgments could not be reconciled. At that point, McCone decided to withdraw from the field as a policy adviser on Vietnam. "[A]s far as I was concerned," he

told Johnson, "I would not advance my views at an NSC meeting unless specifically requested by the president for the simple reason that such matters as military and foreign policy were beyond my competence as Director of Central Intelligence." He had commented on McNamara's paper and expressed his thoughts to the president because he was asked to, but from now on, he said, he would confine himself to intelligence issues. At the next NSC meeting, McCone gave a terse summary of current developments and said nothing more.³⁹

The Intelligence War: The Southern Theater (U)

The administration's war policy review in early 1964 ended with the issuance of NSAM No. 288 on 17 March—a document that was "minimal in the scale of its recommendations at the same time that it stated US objectives in the most sweeping terms used up to that time," according to the *Pentagon Papers*. The directive ordered the implementation of the specific proposals in McNamara's report. There were four possible courses of action at this point, President Johnson told the NSC: "more war' against the DRV [North Vietnam] which is undesirable; pulling out, which is undesirable; neutralization, which is impractical and consequently undesirable; and the course outlined [in the report] which is the only real alternative." The comprehensive policy entailed, among other objectives, providing economic assistance to the South Vietnamese peasantry, training an offensive guerrilla force, augmenting the regular South Vietnamese army, increasing military aid, and revitalizing the Strategic Hamlet Program. The policy also called for clandestine activities conducted by CIA and US Special Forces. McNamara forecast that "if we carry out energetically the proposals he has made, Khanh can stem the tide in South

³⁷ McNamara memorandum, "McNamara-Taylor Mission to South Vietnam," 5 March 1964, and memorandum to the president, "South Vietnam," 16 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 133, 153-67. (U)

³⁸ McNamara memorandum, "McNamara-Taylor Mission to South Vietnam," 5 March 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 155, 157, 164, 166; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...To discuss South Vietnam report," 13 March 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8. Several times as DCI, McCone raised the idea of using Nationalist Chinese troops—in previous years referred to as "unleashing Chiang Kai-shek." William Bundy later noted that it was "a bug with McCone." Ray Cline was the other Agency champion of deploying "ChiNat" forces. *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 126 n. 3; Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 55; Langguth, *Our Vietnam*, 286. Gen. Chiang thought he could best assist the United States and South Vietnam by airdropping (from US planes) up to 10,000 Nationalist guerrillas into the PRC's southwestern province to promote an anticommunist resistance movement and disrupt Chinese supply lines into Indochina. *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 247 n. 4. McCone thought that Nationalist troops might be useful on the Chinese mainland, but he did not support such grandiose ideas in Vietnam. Two hardliners on the JCS—the commandant of the Marine Corps, Lt. Gen. Wallace Greene, and the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Curtis LeMay, agreed with McCone's criticism of McNamara's report. Greene wrote that its recommendations "offer little more than a continuation of present programs," and LeMay advocated attacking Viet Cong sanctuaries in Cambodia and North Vietnamese supply lines in Laos. *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 149-50 n. 3 and 243 n. 3.

³⁹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President...To discuss South Vietnam report," 13 March 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8; Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...National Security Council Meeting, 17 March 1964," *ibid.*; "Summary Record of the 524th Meeting of the National Security Council...March 17, 1964...," *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 170.

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Vietnam, and within four to six months, improve the situation there."⁴⁰ ~~XX~~

McCone's CIA was active in carrying out the administration's policy despite the loss of paramilitary responsibilities under Operation ~~XX~~. The Agency's clandestine enterprises during 1964 divided into two categories: pacification, political action, and espionage operations run in the South, ~~XX~~

Some of these undertakings were already underway when the NSAM No. 288 policy was promulgated and were subsumed under it. US officials thought the change in government in Saigon would create a more hospitable environment for operations. The "Big Minh" regime had objected to sending Agency officers and US advisers into the countryside below the provincial or regimental levels, ~~XX~~

The Agency's pacification program emphasized political action and propaganda and often experimented with variations on earlier projects.⁴² As indicated by the gradual replacement of the term "counterinsurgency" with "pacification," the focus shifted from repressive action against the Viet Cong to mobilizing the Buddhist-Confucian lowland peasantry to side with the Saigon government against the insurgents. The *Census-Grievance and Aspiration Program* was designed to attract the political loyalty of villagers by providing an outlet for their complaints on which the government would try to act quickly. It had an intelligence payoff as well: during interviews, peasants often identified communist cadre. *Counter-Terror Teams* (later renamed *Provincial Reconnaissance Units*) provided a measure of physical security by taking the war into Viet Cong safe areas with

raids, ambushes, and "psywar" ploys. *Advanced Political Action Teams* and *Armed Propaganda Teams* (later called *People's Action Teams* and *Revolutionary Development Teams*), like the communists, lived, ate, slept, and worked in the countryside to assert the government's presence and demonstrate its benevolent intentions. These units, eventually comprising up to 40 men, provided services to villagers and protected them from the insurgents until they were able to defend themselves. By mid-1964, more than 1,200 people in 17 of South Vietnam's 43 provinces were involved with CIA-directed political action teams. ~~XX~~

The Agency's success with pacification depended largely on the commitment of the provincial government and the efficiency with which the indigenous bureaucracy delivered on its promises. CIA's pacification projects had to compete for attention from local officials—they ran alongside a much larger effort by the Saigon government to assert its control in rural areas through a reactivated Strategic Hamlet Program—~~XX~~

According to William Colby, the programs—particularly the People's Action Teams—were more effective at neutralizing and eliminating the Viet Cong infrastructure than at supplanting it with "positive local political institutions to prevent VC reinfiltration and subversion." As he later wrote, they "showed inconclusive results because they were *imposed* from above...rather than *built* from below by local efforts" (his emphasis). The projects accomplished enough, however, that Ambassador Maxwell Taylor and MACV commander William Westmoreland (who replaced Lodge and Harkins, respectively, during the summer) recommended in August 1964 that they be expanded. McCone did not involve himself much in discussions about the pacification program and left its development and implementation in the hands of the DDP—especially FE Division Chief Colby, who recalled that the DCI "was inclined to come directly to me" on Southeast Asian matters. CIA's pacification initiatives were marginally

⁴⁰ NSAM No. 288, "Implementation of South Vietnam Programs," 17 March 1964, and "Summary Record of the 524th Meeting of the National Security Council... March 17, 1964..." *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 171-73; *The Pentagon Papers* 3, 3; Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...National Security Council Meeting, 17 March 1964," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8. ~~XX~~

⁴¹ Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 133; Kahin, 189-90; Lodge telegram to Rusk, 21 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 30-31. ~~XX~~

⁴² This overview draws on Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, chaps. 7-9; *Annual Report for FY 1964*, 137; FE Division, "Chronology of CIA Involvement in Vietnam Paramilitary Programs," 2 June 1975, EA Division Files, Job 81-00336R, box 6, folder 21; de Silva, chaps. 20-21; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 231-34; and Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era*, 209-12. CIA operations had to be coordinated with the rest of the Country Team, and other elements of the US Mission, especially the military, often participated in them. In addition, Agency officers worked in conjunction with a medley of civic action, safety, development, assistance, and "self-help" programs that overt US agencies administered. See Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 214-20. ~~XX~~

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effective, ably run, and uncontroversial, and so did not require McCone's attention.⁴³ ~~SECRET~~

The same was true with Saigon station's unilateral political action and intelligence collection activities. They included cultivating and maintaining assets [redacted]

[redacted] using local media to disseminate propaganda; running a number of well-placed sources [redacted]

[redacted] The station's priority espionage target was the Viet Cong political apparatus: provincial committees and subcommittees, and leaders and members of local guerrilla and terror squads. Overall, Colby recalled,

CIA's political contacts and unilateral penetrations did provide some useful insights into the major political developments on the Saigon scene, but as most of these took place in full public view anyway and at such a dizzying pace, they were almost as well reported in the press and by the embassy, leaving the Agency very little to add.... What's more, the Agency's efforts to work with Vietnamese intelligence services to improve coverage of the Communists in the countryside were almost totally frustrated by the rapid replacement of the leadership of such services with every change in government, and the preoccupation of the new appointees with the much more proximate danger of yet another coup.⁴⁴ ~~SECRET~~

As with other hard targets, technical means—overhead reconnaissance [redacted] proved relatively more effective than human sources at collecting intelligence on the Viet Cong. Since 1962, CIA had flown many U-2 missions over South Vietnam and parts of Laos and Cambodia to photograph Viet Cong activity. McCone reminded the principals, however, that imagery collection faced seri-

ous limitations in a guerrilla war. He pointed out that, even with daily coverage, much insurgent activity was undetectable from the air. Except for truck convoys, Agency photointerpreters had not been able to track enemy infiltration into the South regularly and accurately. By April 1964, in any event, imagery targets shifted from strategic reconnaissance to discern communist intentions, to tactical support of counterinsurgency operations as the Viet Cong stepped up attacks on villages and ARVN positions.⁴⁵ ~~SECRET~~

⁴³ Ahern, *CIA and Rural Pacification in South Vietnam*, 181; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Implications of Saigon Station Experiment in Counterinsurgency," 24 November 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 9; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 224, and *Lost Victory*, 121. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁴ FE Division memorandum, "CIA Political Actions in South Viet Nam," 16 December 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-00597R, box 1, folder 13; de Silva, 216; Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, 46; Colby, *Honorable Men*, 226, 229–34; Blaufarb, *Counterinsurgency Era*, 213. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁵ Peter Jessup (NSC), "Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Special Group, 24 February 1964," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 230. ~~SECRET~~

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CHAPTER 15

The Intelligence War: Taking It to the North (U)

The Agency's worldwide collection program against North Vietnam, instituted in 1959, had deficiencies that came to McCone's attention at a USIB postmortem on a special estimate in April 1964. The estimate had stated that "[f]irm information about North Vietnam is extremely sparse. Accordingly, analysis...is extremely difficult."

produced "very unspectacular results," Colby wrote at the time. The DDP attributed the intelligence gap to North Vietnam's isolation and tight security. A former operations officer with long experience in East Asia recalled that "[o]f all of the denied area targets at the time [the early 1960s] to include the USSR, PRC, GDR [East Germany], North Korea...I believed North Vietnam was the most difficult target." Notwithstanding those formidable difficulties in the field, McCone ordered CIA officers to do what they could to improve reporting.⁴⁷ ~~X~~

MACV directed and controlled this ambitious agenda and created an unconventional warfare unit, euphemistically called the Studies and Observations Group (SOG), to carry out the US military's assignments.

President Johnson approved the program on 16 January 1964, and it went into effect on 1 February. In mid-March, it was assimilated into McNamara's policy recommendations that were promulgated as NSAM No. 288. OPLAN 34A became the weapon the administration used to take the war to the North without overcommitting the United States militarily during an election year. As Maxwell Taylor wrote at the time, "It is quite apparent that [the president] does not want to lose South Vietnam before next November nor does he want to get the country into war." Johnson, McNamara recalled, was "grasping for a way to hurt North Vietnam without direct military action."

⁴⁷ SNIE 14.3-64, "The Outlook for North Vietnam," 4 March 1964; Colby memorandum to Helms, "Comments to DCI on Memorandum Titled 'North Vietnam: Intelligence Deficiencies,'" 29 April 1964, and McCone letter to Hughes, 29 April 1964, CMS Files, Job 82R00370R, box 5, folder 27; Shultz, 15. ~~X~~

⁴⁸ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Bundy untitled memorandum to the president, 7 January 1964, Taylor, "Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the President...March 4, 1964," and Taylor memorandum to McNamara, "North Vietnam Operations," 19 May 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, I, *Vietnam 1964*, 4, 129, 338-40; Shultz, 37-40, 281-90, 299-301, 319-22; Conboy and Andradé, 90-96; Tourison, chaps. 5-8; McNamara, 103. CINCPAC began concerted planning for unattributable hit-and-run raids against North Vietnam, to be carried out by South Vietnamese commandos trained by US military in May 1963. The Joint Chiefs approved a draft, OPLAN 34-63, in August-September; that plan was discussed in November in Honolulu. Department of Defense, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, vol. 3, appendix IV-C-2-a, 2. (U)

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CIA had turned over its agent infiltrations to the US Army under [redacted]

[redacted] Within its own bailiwick, CIA airdropped 17,265,000 leaflets, 215,000 newspapers, 23,950 gift kits, and nine deception kits into the North between 1 February and 1 July 1964. A black radio operation, suspended during the November 1963 coup, was resumed in April 1964 and by July broadcast around six hours a week. In May 1964, the overt Voice of Freedom radio station went on the air seven to eight hours a day from Hue, just south of the DMZ, [redacted]

[redacted] To avoid a repeat of SAC's takeover of U-2 operations over Cuba during the missile crisis, he circulated—with Bundy's approval—a memorandum reaffirming CIA's authority for U-2 flights over most denied territory or covert flights over friendly territory.⁵² ~~XX~~

In Special Group meetings, McCone argued for granting CIA blanket approval for photographic overflights of Laos [redacted] Bundy and Vance objected, citing the need for at least the appearance of US compliance with the Geneva accords. The DCI contended that "we had a single war on our hands in the entire area and we should not

⁴⁹ Because of the problems CIA had experienced with [redacted] Colby recommended that McCone not object if the Pentagon wanted them. The DCI took the advice. Colby memorandum to McCone, ~~XXXXXX~~ Committee Paper on North Vietnam Operations, 4 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. ~~XX~~

⁵⁰ Tourison, 124, and chaps. 5–8 passim; *Annual Report for FY 1964*, 138; John L. Plaster, *SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam*, 24–26. [redacted] 184–85; Shultz, 68–69. ~~XX~~

⁵¹ Shultz, 44, 132–33, 284, 304–5; Conboy and Andradé, 95–96; Ahern, "The Way We Do Things," 85. ~~XX~~

⁵² Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 1348–51; Pedlow and Welzenbach, 230–31; Vance memorandum, "U-2 Reconnaissance in SEASIA," 9 February 1964, and Carter memorandum to McCone, "U-2 Reconnaissance in the Far East," 23 February 1964, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 9; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting...13 February [1964]," and McCone memorandum, "Meeting of Special Group...24 February 1964," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 8; Jessup, "Minutes of the Special Group Meeting, 13 February 1964," and memorandum to Rusk, McNamara, and McCone, "U-2 Reconnaissance in SEASIA," 3 March 1964, *ibid.*, folder 7. By White House directive, the Air Force would fly overt U-2 missions over all of South Vietnam, Cambodia within 30 miles of South Vietnam, North Vietnam within 30 miles of South Vietnam or the coast, and the Laotian panhandle. CIA would fly covert U-2 missions over the remainder of North Vietnam and Laos. Bundy untitled memorandum to Rusk, McNamara, and McCone, 1 March 1964, DCI Files, Job 98B01712R, box 1, folder 3. ~~XX~~

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be so sensitive that we tied our own hands in fighting this war," but the others' diplomatic sensitivities prevailed.⁵³ ~~XX~~

From the inception of OPLAN 34A, McCone held little hope for its success.⁵⁴ He believed that the missions were too limited; that the Viet Cong were already too well established in the South for Hanoi's support to them to be influenced by "pinprick" operations; and that the record of previous missions since mid-1962 was poor. ~~XX~~

~~XX~~ The power of the Khanh government was the crucial variable, the DCI insisted. Unless it established a firm hold in the countryside, expanding clandestine operations in the North would be pointless because the Viet Cong "in all probability...would ultimately take over" the South.

It seems obvious to me that unless the Khanh government is strengthened...carrying the action into North Vietnam would not guarantee victory.... [I]f the Khanh government remains fragile...and we are continually confronted with coup plotting and...if the resentment of [the] American presence increases, then it appears to me that carrying the war to North Vietnam would not win the war in South Vietnam and would cause the United States such serious problems

in every corner of the world that we should not sanction such an effort.⁵⁵ ~~XX~~

McCone did not accept the arguments of Rusk and McNamara that OPLAN 34A demonstrated American resolve. By this time, he had had enough of signals and symbols and did not want Agency resources squandered on gestures. What was needed, he contended, was a "more dynamic, aggressive plan" that would reinvigorate the strategic hamlet program, expand pacification efforts, launch cross-border attacks against Viet Cong havens in Laos and Cambodia, and undertake other political and diplomatic initiatives. Nonetheless, although he thought that "no great results are likely from this kind of effort," he joined McNamara, Rusk, and Bundy in recommending that the president approve OPLAN 34A. He had said his piece, and ~~XX~~

More Dark Clouds (U)

McCone soon had more reason to disagree with the Johnson administration's emerging policy of gradually carrying the war to the North. During 7-9 April, he took part in a war game called SIGMA I-64 that was intended to project how the conflict would develop over the next decade.⁵⁷ (He had suggested the objective to the Joint War Games Agency in January when the idea of playing a Vietnam game had been discussed.) Designed by the RAND Corporation,

⁵³ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group Meeting on 23 April [1964]...", and "Memorandum for the Record...303 Committee Meeting...24 September [1964]...", McCone Papers, box 1, folder 8. ~~XX~~

⁵⁴ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 46-47, 49-50, 52-53; Colby memorandum to McCone, "OPLAN 34A: Accomplishments During Phase I (1 February-31 May 1964)," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 8; McCone memorandum, "Discussion with Secretary McNamara and General Taylor...", 29 February 1964, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 5; Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on North Vietnam—7 January 1964," and McCone, "Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy) to the President," 7 January 1964, and McCone, "Memorandum on Vietnam," 3 March 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, I, *Vietnam 1964*, 4-5, 125-27; Colby memorandum to McCone, "Krulak Committee Paper on North Vietnam Operations," 4 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. ~~XX~~

⁵⁵ McCone later made his argument in more colorful terms to his friends Henry and Clare Boothe Luce: if South Vietnam were not strong enough to take retaliation from the North, it risked "being clawed to death by the northern monster in its dying gasps after the heart had been struck." McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Luce...12 June 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11. ~~XX~~

⁵⁶ Though McCone did not say so, he also may have objected to the political calculations that were factored into White House decisions to limit US involvement in Vietnam during an election year. President Johnson expressed that thinking in a secretly recorded conversation with McGeorge Bundy in March. In response to the Joint Chiefs' urgings that the United States "get in or get out" of Vietnam—a position very much like the DCI's—Johnson told Bundy privately that he was only a "trustee" president, and that "I got to win an election...and then...you can make a decision. But in the meantime let's see if we can't find enough things to do to keep them off base and stop these shipments that are coming in from Laos, and take a few selective targets to upset them a bit without getting another Korea operation started." Transcript of Johnson conversation with Bundy, 4 March 1964, *Taking Charge*, 267. (U)

⁵⁷ SIGMA I-64 is described in most detail by another participant, William H. Sullivan of the Department of State, in his memoir, *Obbligato: 1939-1979: Notes on a Foreign Service Career*, 178-81; see also Bird, *The Color of Truth*, 276-77; John Prados, *Pentagon Games*, 62-63; Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 57-58; Krepinovich, 133-34; Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 460-62; Helms memorandum to McCone, "War Game on South Vietnam," 24 March 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01480R, box 16, folder 342. Sullivan, who played the commander of North Vietnamese forces, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, misdates the game as taking place in the spring of 1963. McCone did not participate in the first Vietnam war game held during his directorship, SIGMA I-62 in February 1962, which pitted a US team against a Viet Cong enemy. (Cf. Henry L. Trewhitt, *McNamara*, 222, which confuses the I-62 and I-64 games.) He was scheduled to take part in a counterinsurgency war game at the Pentagon in late October 1963, but his records do not indicate that he did. Robert Buzzanco, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era*, 125-26; McCone calendars, entries for 24, 28, and 30 October 1963. ~~XX~~

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SIGMA I-64 was a command post exercise in which the players were divided into two teams—Blue (the United States and South Vietnam) and Red (North Vietnam and the Viet Cong)—each with a policy and an action element. McCone headed the Blue Team's policy group, and his Red Team counterpart was Maxwell Taylor; they played Lyndon Johnson and Ho Chi Minh, respectively. [redacted] deputy chief of FE Division, and Chester Cooper of ONE were the other CIA players in McCone's group; four other FE and ONE officers played on the action and control elements. ~~X~~

The rules for SIGMA I-64 called for Taylor's team to use guerrilla strategy and tactics, exploit weaknesses in conventional military doctrine, accept heavy casualties, and undermine democratic processes by using propaganda and deception. As the game progressed, military and political conditions in South Vietnam worsened, and McCone's team found its options shrinking to two unpromising alternatives: major escalation of conventional warfare or de-escalation and eventual withdrawal. The former risked Chinese intervention and repetition of the Korean War, and the latter would seriously damage America's credibility and prestige. By the end of the exercise, steady escalation and the use of massive US air power north of the DMZ had not changed either the tactical or the strategic picture. The foundation of current administration policy was thus called into question: Attacking the North did *not* save the South. In the game, even though the United States eventually deployed 500,000 ground troops and a large contingent of air and naval forces over a period of several years, the communists overran most of Laos and controlled most of the South Vietnamese countryside. Their infrastructure remained intact despite severe losses in manpower, and they had overextended and demoralized the ARVN. US policy had severe domestic repercussions as well. Antiwar agitation arose on American campuses, and Congress prepared to oppose the administration's handling of the war. (U)

According to William Sullivan of the Department of State, who led the Red Team's action element, McCone

"concluded that his organization [the Blue Team] ought to call it quits and cut its losses."

The experience of that game made him a dove on Vietnam then and forever more. He felt that its projections were accurate and that the shadows they cast before them should be heeded as real. He did not like what he foresaw if the US engagement in Vietnam continued down that predictable path.

That observation is not entirely accurate, for McCone would soon advocate a much heavier conventional aerial and clandestine assault against North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. It is correct to say, however, that the game hardened his opinion that the United States must do what it needed to win the war, or it should pull out and leave the struggle to the South Vietnamese. (U)

One insight McCone did *not* take away from SIGMA I-64 was that heavy bombing of North Vietnam would not force it to stop supporting the communist insurgency in the South. In a review of the game, two CIA participants told the DCI that "[n]o data have as yet been brought to bear which convince us that bombing the DRV could be expected to have any greater effect on the capabilities and will of the enemy than was the case with the French against the Viet Minh, a decade ago, or the US against North Korea." McCone had very different views on the efficacy of air power and would soon become, after Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay, the strongest voice in the administration for bombing Hanoi into submission (see Chapter 17).⁵⁸

Just after SIGMA I-64 was finished, the DCI's special intelligence survey team submitted its second report. Washington and Saigon, the [redacted] officers concluded, had made progress in developing counterinsurgency programs, but both the US and South Vietnamese military remained fixed on conventional methods of warfare, and bureaucratic inertia and disarray at the middle and lower levels of the Saigon government were stifling initiative and innovation.

⁵⁸ [redacted] and Harold P. Ford (ONE), "Memorandum for the Record...Comment on the Vietnam War Games, SIGMA I-64...", DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 1, folder 9. The record does not indicate whether McCone shared LeMay's criticism that SIGMA I-64's rules had artificially limited the Blue Team's ability to use air power. The outspoken general's objections caused enough controversy that the Pentagon decided to replay the game in September 1964. Even with greater weight and flexibility given to the Air Force, SIGMA II-64 produced similar results and reinforced doubts concerning heavy bombing of the North. McCone was invited to participate in the game and showed up for one session. Walter Elder has said that McCone "hated all war games" and grudgingly participated out of "innate snobbery when he learned that the other seniors would be there." Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 205-6; Krepinevich, 133-34; Bird, *The Color of Truth*, 277; Karnow, 399-400; Thomas B. Allen, *War Games*, chap. 10; McCone calendars, entry for 10 September 1964; Earle G. Wheeler (Chairman, JCS) letter to McCone, 1 August 1964, and [redacted] Memorandum for the Record...Comments on SIGMA II..., 1 October 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 8; Ford, *CLIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 67. McGeorge Bundy also criticized SIGMA I-64, saying it had been "quite crude" and "probably moved too fast" to simulate reality. Colby memorandum, "Meeting on North Vietnam—30 May 1964," EA Division Files, Job 78-00697R, box 1, folder 7. ~~X~~

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The survey team recommended that the administration increase US advice and support for intelligence collection, political and civic action, and psychological warfare programs, and that disparate paramilitary forces be combined and more tightly administered. McCone urged his deputies to "button up" the team's work by moving its proposals ahead to the NSC's Vietnam Coordinating Committee, with the presumption that two of its key members, Sullivan and NSC official Michael Forrestal, would endorse them. That was done—and the ideas went no farther. The Country Team viewed CIA warily, and the Pentagon dismissed Agency suggestions for better utilizing regular forces.⁵⁹ ~~SECRET~~

In early May 1964, Gen. Khanh's unexpected proposal that South Vietnam go on a war footing, evacuate Saigon, and break relations with France (because Charles de Gaulle had been advocating "neutralization") prompted an urgent meeting at the White House with the president, Rusk, McNamara, Taylor, McGeorge Bundy, and McCone. They decided that McNamara, Taylor, Forrestal, and William Bundy should go to Saigon to deal with this sudden development. No one suggested including McCone, and his offer of intelligence support (in the form of William Colby) was not accepted. The secretary of defense returned at mid-month to report the bleak news that chaos reigned in South Vietnam. Viet Cong attacks had intensified, and the Khanh government had lost control of more territory despite improvements in counterinsurgency operations. To stabilize the dramatically deteriorating situation, McNamara proposed a large increase in Saigon's regular and paramilitary forces, which in turn would require another sizable increment in American support.⁶⁰ ~~SECRET~~

President Johnson did not want to widen the war significantly, but he was willing to take some risks. How would Hanoi and Peking react, he asked the principals, if he authorized retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam, as Gen. Khanh wanted? Taylor did not think the communists' responses would amount to much, but McCone sharply disagreed. He warned that neither the North Vietnamese nor the Communist Chinese could be expected to sit passively while the war's tempo and scope increased drastically. In a brief private meeting on 16 May, the DCI told the president that, at his direction, CIA's most experienced analysts had prepared a comprehensive assessment and concluded that the state of affairs in the South was grave. More American economic and military aid to Saigon would not solve the fundamental problem—Khanh's failure to create a strong and stable government. At other meetings, McCone advised that there was now at least an even chance that, by the end of the year, both Vietnam and Laos "would be very difficult to save" unless strong action was taken directly against North Vietnam. Committing US ground troops would be a political blunder, however, because "[t]he American public are fed up with adventures such as the Korean War and would not stand for another one." Instead, air attacks "would be more decisive...and possibly conclusive," and the public would accept them. "If we go into North Vietnam," he told the NSC, "we should go in hard." In taking this beligerent position, the DCI differed with most of his Vietnam specialists in the DDP, DI, and ONE, who continued to insist that the war would be won or lost in the South, and that the best hope for victory lay in improving Saigon's political and military performance.⁶¹ ~~SECRET~~

⁵⁹ [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Special Report of the CIA Special Survey Team on its Mission to Vietnam," 13 April 1964, McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 13 April 1964, and [redacted] memorandum to Helms, "The Two Reports on [redacted] Recommendations," 15 April 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. MACV commander Harkins thought the survey team's February report mixed old information and unevaluated observations, went beyond its area of responsibility, and would confuse policymakers. Harkins cable to Taylor, MAC 665, 21 February 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 100-102. Lodge was more ingratiating when he met with the team in early March. Intelligence Survey Team memorandum to COS, "1st Meeting with the Ambassador," 8 March 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 8. COS Peer de Silva cabled Headquarters that the team's "presence on the Vietnamese scene was looked upon with some suspicion and considerable wariness by American elements here, principally MACV and to a certain extent the Embassy.... All were relieved and noticeably friendlier when the team departed." SAIG 5751, 13 April 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342. ~~SECRET~~

⁶⁰ Documents 136-38 and 140-42 in *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 284-96; Cooper memorandum to McCone, "Comments of Saigon LimDis Cable 2108," McCone memorandum, "Discussion at Luncheon Meeting[,] 5 May [1964]....," Colby memoranda, "Presidential Meeting on Vietnam—6 May 1964," and "Memorandum for the Record...Report by Secretary McNamara—14 May 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 8. ~~SECRET~~

⁶¹ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Meeting...15 May [1964]....," and "Memorandum for the Record...National Security Council Meeting—16 May 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 8; "Notes Prepared by the Secretary of Defense...May 14, 1964," "Memorandum Prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency," 15 May 1964, "Summary Record of the National Security Council Executive Committee Meeting...May 24, 1964....," SNIE 50-2-64, "Probable Consequences of Certain US Actions with Respect to Vietnam and Laos," 25 May 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 322-27, 336, 370, 378-80; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at Dinner at the White House...May 24th[, 1964]....," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 10; Cooper memorandum to McCone, "The Military Effectiveness of Aerial Strikes on PL/DRV Targets in Laos," 30 May 1964, *ibid.*; "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 56-60; Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 62. ~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~*Working With a New Boss (I): McCone, LBJ, and Vietnam (U)*

McCone joined almost all of the administration's senior Vietnam policymakers at a conference at CINCPAC headquarters in Honolulu during the first week of June for an extensive discussion of the whole situation in Southeast Asia.⁶² Despite all the talk, no major policy decision was made. A proposed action plan involving graduated military pressures, culminating in limited air attacks against North Vietnam, went unapproved. McCone spoke infrequently during the three days he was there. When he did, he reiterated his grim view of events and prospects, in contrast to the more upbeat Lodge and Westmoreland. He disagreed with McNamara about the value of "surgical" bombing. The secretary of defense thought such attacks would convey the desired signal to Hanoi whether the targets were destroyed or not. McCone thought the passage of a congressional resolution supporting military action would deliver a much stronger message and be an "enormous deterrent" to the North Vietnamese.⁶³

The conference ended inconclusively, with US departments and agencies essentially being told to do what they were doing, only a bit more and better. "At best," McNamara wrote to the president, during the next three to six months, "the situation will jog along about as it is...[and] it may continue to deteriorate slowly." A follow-on meeting of Vietnam advisers, which McCone attended, made little additional progress, and without a plan to escalate the war, the administration for now dropped the idea of getting Congress' formal approval for future military action. The president wanted to keep Vietnam out of the upcoming

campaign. He had no intention of abandoning South Vietnam, but he would not expand US involvement, either. For now, the current policy would continue, as would planning for a wider war in the near future.⁶⁴

McNamara's forecast proved accurate. During the next several weeks, the South Vietnamese army won a few minor battles but did not seize the initiative in repelling more frequent Viet Cong attacks. Buddhists, Catholics, and students resumed antigovernment activity. Rumors of coups swirled continuously in Saigon. Gen. Khanh, uneasy and insecure, publicly urged the United States to "march to the North" and complained about the new ambassador, Maxwell Taylor, appointed in late June. Taylor reported in August that "the best thing that can be said about the present Khanh government is that it has lasted six months and has about a 50-50 chance of lasting out the year...." In the meantime, North Vietnam mobilized its own forces for war, accelerated the transformation of the Ho Chi Minh Trail from a web of jungle pathways into an intricate logistical network, and prepared regular army units for infiltration into the South. As of late summer 1964, the administration's policy of graduated pressures against the North and increased support for the Saigon government was demonstrably inadequate.⁶⁵

The Tonkin Gulf Incidents: A Sign of the Times (U)

McCone's forthright criticisms of US policy in Southeast Asia were even less welcome now than in previous months, and his assessment of the first Vietnam crisis of the Johnson

⁶² Sources used on the conference are: documents 187-89, 192-93, 201, 210, and 214 in *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 412-33, 440-46, 461-64, 487-92, 500; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Observations and Agreed Actions at Honolulu Meetings..." 3 June 1964, and William Bundy, "Memorandum for the Record...Tuesday Afternoon Session in Honolulu, June 2, 1964," McCone Papers, box 3, folder 11; McNamara, 121-22; Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 143-46. The main participants at the Honolulu conference, besides the DCI, were McNamara, Taylor, Rusk, William Bundy, Forrestal, Westmoreland, Lodge, and Adm. Harry Felt, the CINCPAC.

⁶³ General Counsel Lawrence Houston had advised McCone that the 1954 and 1962 Geneva protocols on Vietnam and Laos, respectively, did not sanction most of the military moves the administration was considering, and even if the SEATO treaty permitted them, he believed that it was politically unwise for the United States to engage in direct combat in Southeast Asia without congressional authorization. McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Executive Committee with the President..." 6 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; Colby, "Memorandum for the Record...White House Meeting on Southeast Asia, 6 June 1964," DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 12; Houston memorandum to McCone, "Legal Aspects of the Southeast Asia Situation," 8 June 1964, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 11; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1973)," 851-54. At the White House's behest—one of the rare times it used him for that purpose—McCone met with several members of Congress after the Honolulu conference to determine whether a resolution would pass. He got an unenthusiastic reception. McCone, "Various Discussions Concerning a Joint Resolution by Congress in Connection with Southeast Asia," 24 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11.

⁶⁴ McGeorge Bundy recalled the frustration he and other advisers felt about the president's reluctance to confront the Vietnam issue during the pre-election period. "He was extremely careful...you couldn't get a decision out of him." Quoted in Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 148. (U)

⁶⁵ Taylor cable to Rusk, SAIG 377, 10 August 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 657; [redacted] memorandum to McCone, "Station Relations with Ambassador Taylor," 28 July 1964, with attachments, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 12; Anem, *CIA and the Generals*, 23-24; "CIA IG Report on Vietnam," 74; Colby, *Lost Victory*, chap. 10 *passim*; Kahin, chap. 8 *passim*. McCone judged that the change in ambassadors gave CIA an opportunity to improve its standing at the embassy, especially if the Agency counterattacked against other US officials who had made it look bad:

I do not think we should pull any punches in laying out the failures of Lodge to utilize the Station properly, the damage done by "blowing" covert assets...and the fact that MACV plumbered up a lot of very good work on the part of the station as a result of [redacted]... I want to demonstrate to Taylor a willingness to do anything and everything to put the show on the road and give them support and I do not want to protect anyone, including General Taylor himself, from past errors.

McCone memorandum to Helms, 26 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5.

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CHAPTER 15

presidency—the Gulf of Tonkin incidents of early August 1964—had no evident influence on administration policy.⁶⁶ On the afternoon of the 2nd, three North Vietnamese motor torpedo boats attacked the US Navy destroyer *Maddox* 30 miles off the coast. The *Maddox* was in international waters at the time, but earlier it had been several miles inside the 12-mile limit claimed by Hanoi, conducting an ELINT mission as part of a series of patrols, code-named DESOTO, that the US Navy had run in the Tonkin Gulf since February. The *Maddox* and US Navy aircraft from a nearby carrier sank or disabled two enemy vessels. The next day, accompanied by another DESOTO ship, the destroyer *C. Turner Joy*, the *Maddox* continued its clandestine collection mission and again sailed close to the North Vietnamese coast. ~~X~~

On the night of the 4th, the US ships reported that enemy PT boats were firing on them. Despite subsequent confusion on the scene and in Washington about what, if anything, had happened, President Johnson—who chose to respond to the first attack only with a diplomatic protest—decided on the 5th to retaliate by sending US planes to bomb several North Vietnamese offshore naval installations and an oil depot. These airstrikes were the United States' first overt punitive attacks on North Vietnam. The president went on national television late that evening to justify his action: "Aggression by terror against the peaceful villagers of South Vietnam has now been joined by open aggression on the high seas against the United States." He then called on Congress to approve the grandly labeled "Joint Resolution to Promote the Maintenance of International Peace and Security in Southeast Asia." Soon known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, it authorized the president to use whatever military force he judged necessary against the Vietnamese communists. Seized by a sense of crisis, Congress passed the resolution on the 7th with only two dissenting votes. Also that day, the JCS approved a new military opera-

tion plan, OPLAN 37-65, that incorporated OPLAN 34A as a continuing covert program. ~~X~~

McCone was on the West Coast when the first incident occurred and did not return to Washington until the 4th. In the meantime, President Johnson kept CIA out of the loop.

He did not ask any Agency officer—not Acting DCI Carter, DDP Helms, FE Division Chief Colby, DDI Cline, or Vietnam Working Group chairman Cooper—to attend his first meeting with key Vietnam advisers just hours after the North Vietnamese attack on the 2nd. He did, however, summon several lower ranking

military intelligence officers (he later called them "experts in technical intelligence") to help interpret intercepted North Vietnamese radio messages. At this stage, the president was treating the matter as purely military. Agency officers did not participate in any meetings on the Tonkin Gulf incidents until McCone gave his first direct advice to Johnson at a luncheon meeting on the 4th, attended also by Rusk, McNamara, Vance, and McGeorge Bundy. He told Johnson that he "favored a dynamic action because the NVN's [North Vietnamese] had committed an aggressive act of war against us. We were the victims." He urged a forceful response even though he and others in the administration knew that Hanoi may have been retaliating for OPLAN 34A raids by American-trained South Vietnamese maritime commandos on targets in North Vietnam on 30 July. McCone concurred with McNamara's proposal that US forces attack four North Vietnamese naval bases, but he added that the president should seek a congressional resolution authorizing the military action, as Eisenhower had during the Lebanon crisis in 1958. ~~X~~

At an NSC meeting early that evening, however, McCone expressed strong reservations about the rationale on which Johnson was basing his decision to launch a retaliatory air strike. When the president asked him if the North



McCone at an NSC meeting about the first Tonkin Gulf incident (U)

Photo: Bettmann/CORBIS

⁶⁶ On the Tonkin Gulf incidents, in addition to the previously cited sources on the Johnson administration and Vietnam, see also Hanyok, chap. 5; Edwin E. Moise, *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War*, passim; Johnson, *American Cryptology*, 515–23; Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, 293–301; Prados, *Hidden History of the Vietnam War*, chap. 6; Bird, *The Color of Truth*, 285–89; McNamara, chap. 5; Edward J. Marolda and Oscar P. Fitzgerald, *The United States Navy and the Vietnam Conflict. Volume II*, chaps. 14–15; Tourison, chap. 10; and "Memorandum to the Director...Review of the 2 and 4 August Incidents in the Tonkin Gulf," 8 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 8, folder 1. ~~X~~

~~SECRET~~*Working With a New Boss (I): McCone, LBJ, and Vietnam (U)*

Vietnamese wanted to provoke a war by attacking US Navy ships, McCone replied:

No. The North Vietnamese are reacting defensively to our attacks on their offshore islands. They are responding out of pride and on the basis of defense considerations. The attack is a signal to us that the North Vietnamese have the will and determination to continue the war. They are raising the ante.

President Johnson and his advisers did not believe Hanoi would be so foolhardy as to challenge the formidable naval power of United States and would not have retaliated for OPLAN 34A missions because they had been so ineffective. McCone, however, judged more accurately that North Vietnam's leaders saw the US warships in the Tonkin Gulf as an opportune target for telling Washington that they would not stand for clandestine violations of their country's sovereignty and would not be deterred from pursuing their long-range goal of unifying Vietnam under their control. At a briefing of the congressional leadership at the White House immediately afterward, the DCI was disturbed at Rusk's "evasive" answers that "left the impression that there was no serious overt [US] attack north of the 17th parallel but merely some covert espionage and sabotage operations"—in short, that the North Vietnamese action was totally unjustified. "I concluded that the meeting would break up with a misunderstanding...[and] I concluded that the group must be fully informed." McCone—apparently without consulting the president—then proceeded to tell the legislators about the extensive US program of clandestine operations,

including the raid on 30 July that he believed prompted the North Vietnamese attack on the *Maddox* on 2 August.⁶⁸ ~~✗~~

Within a few days, McCone had cause to question the intelligence on which the administration was acting.

Presumably the DDI, whom PFIAB had summoned for an interview, first told McCone what he was going to say, especially given that the board's chairman, Clark Clifford, was a bureaucratic rival and personal antagonist of the DCI. McCone did not tell the White House about Cline's reservations, which were far from conclusive. On 8 August he read another internal assessment [redacted] although fragmentary and ambiguous, it was "highly suggestive that action against the DESOTO patrol was contemplated." President Johnson knew that [redacted] meaning was debatable and did not hear that CIA had any qualms about them until the 10th, when Clifford told him what Cline had said. It was a moot point. By then, Johnson had his congressional mandate and was not going to undercut his policy by publicly questioning whether the North Vietnamese really had launched a second attack. There was nothing for McCone to gain by raising the issue, either. As presidential aide Walt Rostow would later observe about the Tonkin Gulf episode, "We don't know what happened, but it had the desired result."⁶⁹ ~~✗~~

⁶⁷ Johnson, *Vantage Point*, 113–14; editorial notes in *FRUS*, 1964–68, I, *Vietnam* 1964, 590, 608–9; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record. Luncheon at the Mansion...Discussion re retaliation for the attack on the *Maddox*," 4 August 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9.

⁶⁸ "Summary Notes of the 538th Meeting of the National Security Council...August 4, 1964...," *FRUS*, 1964–68, I, *Vietnam* 1964, 611; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Meeting—August 4th[1964]..." with attachment, "Probable North Vietnamese and Chinese Communist Reactions to Certain US Reprisals Against North Vietnam," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Leadership...4 August 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9. On the 3rd, McNamara and Rusk had briefed members of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees on the OPLAN 34A missions and the DESOTO patrols. McNamara, 131–32; "Editorial Note," *FRUS*, 1964–68, I, *Vietnam* 1964, 600. ~~✗~~

⁶⁹ Moise, 197–99; Lloyd C. Gardner, *Don Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam*, 137–38; Karnow, 373–74, 376; McNamara, 135.

Lonnie E. Ford, "Secret Army, Secret War, Recent Disclosures and the Vietnam War: The Significance of American 34 Alpha and DESOTO Operations with Regard to the Tonkin Gulf Resolution," *ICNS* 11, no. 2 (April 1996):

In October, McCone told PFIAB about the "dangerous situation" in which "top policy officials grabbed onto fragments of raw intelligence and made decisions before the information had been evaluated in the light of the total information available and relevant.... Policy officials should make use of the evaluating machinery which is at hand." PFIAB, "Minutes of Board Meeting of October 1 and 2, 1964," PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10000, PFIAB Records, NARA. NSA historian Robert Hanyok (in *Spartans in Darkness*) has established conclusively that SIGINT showed there was no attack on the 4th. A few days later, the president privately admitted his own doubts about what had happened that night. "Hell," he told an adviser a few days later, "those dumb stupid sailors were just shooting at flying fish." Karnow, 374. ~~✗~~

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CHAPTER 15

Out of Favor (U)

President Johnson had secured congressional and public support for his Vietnam policy, and with the November election approaching, he resisted pleas for launching an air war over North Vietnam. He had his legislative resolution, his approval rating had jumped from 42 to 72 percent, and 85 percent of the American people supported the punitive airstrikes. Not surprisingly, he chose to continue the gradual escalation of the US role in the war. "Johnson got involved in his quagmire in Vietnam," McCone later observed, "because he couldn't make up his mind to win the war. It was my philosophy...[that you] don't get in a war if you can avoid it, but if you get in a war, then win it. And then settle the issues afterwards." Still, neither McCone nor other like-minded officials in the administration—at this time, McGeorge Bundy, Rusk, Westmoreland, the Joint Chiefs, and Walt Rostow—could persuade the president that all-out bombing of the North would save the South.⁷⁰ (U)

By then, McCone had already sounded out the president about how much he was wanted in the administration. At a meeting in mid-June, the DCI suggested that it was time for him to leave. According to Walter Elder, Johnson "waved this aside, stating that he wanted McCone to remain, certainly until after the election."⁷¹ To maintain the façade of unity among his advisers and avoid giving his partisan opponents an issue, he would not let his Republican DCI resign so soon before the campaign. For his part, McCone did not want to give the GOP candidate, Sen. Barry Goldwater, any help. Despite the DCI's conservative views, partisan loyalties, and disagreements with the president, he showed little enthusiasm for Goldwater's candidacy for personal and professional reasons.⁷² For the time being, McCone was in a bureaucratic limbo—on the outside of the White House looking in, relegated to the lesser function of purveyor of classified information, without a major place in Vietnam strategy debates. He had to wait for a more auspicious moment to disengage from his increasingly troubled relationship with Lyndon Johnson. ~~(S)~~

⁷⁰ McCone/McAuliffe OH, 32, 35, 51. (U)


⁷¹ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1986)," chap. 10, 51. ~~(S)~~

⁷² McCone agreed with a journalist's characterization of the GOP's nominee as "lazy" and noted that when Goldwater was in California during the convention, "[h]e didn't do anything.... He was up to the Bohemian Grove [an elite retreat in the redwood forests outside San Francisco], he was out boating, and every picture you would see he hadn't shaved." Transcript of conversation with Reston, 9 September 1964, 24, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 11. Also, after President Johnson directed that presidential candidates receive intelligence briefings, Goldwater snubbed CIA on the grounds that knowing classified information might "gag" him when he wanted to speak about national security issues. He received top-secret DIA briefings, however, in his capacity as a major general in the Air Force Reserve. "Goldwater—Secret Pentagon Briefings?," *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 July 1964. Intelligence—General clipping file, box 3. HIC:/

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Working With a New Boss (II): Intelligence Affairs under Johnson (U)

Vietnam and the satellite reconnaissance programs took up more of John McCone's time than any other issue in the 17 months he served as President Johnson's DCI. He spent a fair share of his workday on a variety of other CIA and Intelligence Community concerns, however. Some of them have been discussed earlier; a few other prominent ones will be examined in detail in this chapter. In the operational area, McCone was most actively engaged with Cuba, the most important target of covert action outside Southeast Asia at that time. The most troublesome counterintelligence and security matter he dealt with was the search for a Soviet penetration agent inside CIA. In addition, he worked hard to improve the Agency's public image and reputation at the White House and to manage its business on a reduced budget. Lastly, McCone continued his efforts to administer community affairs efficiently and to avoid intelligence conflicts with the Pentagon at a time when the Vietnam war was straining CIA's relations with the military. ~~XX~~

tle," McGeorge Bundy admitted to a colleague afterward, "but he [Johnson] needs to be taken up and down the hills we've all been on so many times." At first, the new president took a Kennedyesque hard line toward Castro. He told McCone in late November 1963 that "the Cuban situation was one that we could not live with," that the administration "had to evolve more aggressive policies," and that he looked to CIA for "firm recommendations." Accordingly, the DCI and the other members of the NSC's Special Group authorized CIA to develop among Cuban exile groups the capability to stage air attacks against targets on the island. At the same time, the Agency continued to identify military dissidents, build espionage nets, disseminate propaganda, and prepare commando strikes on economic facilities. 

Easing Up on Castro (U)

President Johnson and his principal adviser on Latin American policy, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Mann, followed the Kennedy administration's anticommunist, pro-business approach, which sought to prevent social upheaval by encouraging economic development. They modified it, however, under the so-called Mann Doctrine by deemphasizing political reform and overtly accepting military dictatorships as long as they maintained order and contained subversion. The Alliance for Progress, for example, became a conventional aid program and lost the "social justice" content of the Kennedy administration.¹ (U)

"What can I do about Cuba that won't get me in trouble?" Lyndon Johnson asked his national security advisers soon after succeeding to the presidency. "The answer is lit-

Events soon after President Kennedy's death might have driven Johnson into an even more confrontational policy toward Cuba than his predecessors.

- In November 1963 the Venezuelan government discovered a large cache of Cuban-origin weapons and explosives on a farm in the northwestern part of the country (see Chapter 6). The discovery led CIA to conclude that there was now "solid evidence" for a "conclusive case" that Havana was trying to subvert neighboring pro-US governments.
- During 9–13 January 1964, anti-US riots involving more than 30,000 people in several cities in Panama left four US soldiers and 24 Panamanians dead, nearly 300 people wounded, and more than \$2 million in property destroyed in several cities. Local communists and Castro supporters agitated openly during the period, pre-

¹ References to literature on the Johnson administration and Latin America are in the Appendix on Sources. (U)

² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at his residence with President Johnson..." 29 November 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 901–2; Joseph A. Califano (General Counsel, Department of the Army) memorandum to McNamara et al., "Meeting with the President on Cuba...December 19, 1963," Office of the Secretary of Defense Files, FRC 330-77-131, Misc. 63–65; CIA memoranda, "Suggestions for Additional Administration Statements on Cuba to Stimulate Anti-Castro Action on the Part of Dissident Elements in the Cuban Armed Forces," 9 December 1963, "Cuba—A Status Report," 12 December 1963, and Desmond Fitzgerald (DDP/Special Affairs Staff), "Meeting at the White House[,] 19 December 1963," *FRUS, 1961–1963, XXIX/XII, Cuba 1961–1962; Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath; American Republics: Microfiche Supplement*, docs. 723, 725, and 733; Fitzgerald memorandum to McCone, "Considerations for US Policy Toward Cuba and Latin America," 9 December 1963, MORI doc. no. 209969.

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CHAPTER 16

sumably contributing to the president's belief that the riots were Castro-inspired.³

- In February, after the Coast Guard seized four Cuban fishing boats in US waters off the Florida Keys, Castro retaliated by cutting off the water supply to the US Naval Base at Guantánamo. Americans at the facility were in no danger because a contingency plan existed for having tankers shuttle water from Florida while base residents conserved supplies.

Notwithstanding these events, President Johnson chose a slow and cautious approach to Cuba that stressed multilateral diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions, and he played down secret warfare.⁴ The new strategy was to isolate Cuba politically and commercially while quietly exploring signs that Castro wanted a rapprochement—under terms set in Washington. ~~✗~~

At the new administration's first comprehensive discussion about anti-Castro operations, in mid-December 1963, the president postponed any sizable covert projects to destabilize the Cuban regime, although he continued to approve small-scale covert actions to keep US operatives busy and hopeful, even though Johnson thought they were "hypocritical and ineffectual." For the first few months of 1964, the Special Group approved a number of espionage and logistics missions into Cuba but rejected or tabled all sabotage proposals. "[T]he pressure [from the White House] for boom and bang stopped," recalled Samuel Halpern, the senior officer on the DDP's Special Affairs Staff, which was running the covert operations.⁵ Johnson had several reasons for

this shift. He wanted to distance himself from the Kennedy administration's more adventurous policies. He did not want to antagonize the Soviet Union, incite a military clash with Havana, or derail US efforts to have the OAS punish Cuba for supplying arms to Venezuelan insurgents. Johnson also may have feared provoking Cuban attempts on his life, having concluded soon after Kennedy was assassinated that pro-Castro Cubans were responsible. ~~✗~~

Johnson's caution would frustrate McCone. In December, in NSC discussions about responses to the discovery of the arms cache in Venezuela, McCone opposed a diplomatic initiative and a plan to shadow and search suspect vessels. He thought contraband-bearing ships could too easily evade surveillance and believed diplomatic efforts would probably give Castro "reason to laugh in about three months' time over [their] ineffectuality." The DCI did not specify what he thought the administration should do about Cuban support to regional subversives. ~~✗~~

Discussion of the cutoff of water to the Guantánamo Naval Base, added to strain between McCone and the president. According to CIA, Castro wanted to highlight what he regarded as an American "policy of aggression" and show the Cuban people and other Latin Americans that he could insult the United States with impunity. *El jefe maximo* did not, however, want to spark a military conflict; according to CIA reporting, he cut off the water because it was the least provocative of three contemplated reactions to the fishing boats' detention—one of which was shooting down a U-2. As McNamara observed, "From a military point of view,

³ The violence ensued after American students raised the US flag by itself at a high school in the American-controlled Canal Zone in defiance of a Zone administration order that both the US and the Panamanian flags fly at civilian institutions. SNIE 84-64, "The Short Run Outlook in Panama," 11 March 1964, 4-5; ~~✗~~

CIA intelligence report 118-99812, background information on the border clashes of 9 January... 18 January 1964, MORI doc. no. 449649; Walter LaFeber, *The Panama Canal*, 106-11; Alan McPherson, "Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964," *DH* 28, no. 1 (January 2004): 83-112; *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXI, *South and Central America; Mexico*, docs. 367-77 on 770-800. ~~✗~~

⁴ William O. Walker III, "The Johnson Administration and Cuba," in H.W. Brands, ed., *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam*, 61, 66-67; Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 53; Gordon Chase (NSC), memorandum of meeting with the president on Cuba, 19 December 1963, and NSAM No. 274, "Cuba—Economic Denial Program," 20 December 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 904-10; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President on Cuba...19 December 1963," and FitzGerald, "Meeting at the White House[,] 19 December 1963," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XII/XII, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Microfiche Supplement*, doc. 733; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Standing Group Meeting...10 December 1963," DDO Files, Job 78-02958R, box 3, folder 12; "President Asks Review on Cuba," *New York Times*, 9 December 1963, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; Dean Rusk oral history interview by ~~✗~~ Washington, DC, 2 January 1970, pt. 2, 8-10. ~~✗~~

⁵ Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Disarmament Meeting on 18 January 1964 at the White House," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 14, folder 1; "Excerpts from Memorandum for the Record of 31 January 1964...Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board..." CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 131; Breuer, 225-40; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 309 citing interview with Halpern; minutes of Special Group meetings on 9 January, 13 and 27 February, and 2 April 1964, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7. ~~✗~~

⁶ Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World*, 107-8; "Editorial Note," *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XI, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 896; Rusk memorandum to the president, "Venezuelan Announcement of Cuban Origin of Discovered Arms Cache," 27 November 1963, "Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Posts in the American Republics," DEPTTEL 1016, 4 December 1963, "Record of Actions by the National Security Council Standing Group," 10 December 1963, *FRUS*, 1961-1963, XII, *American Republics*, 352-55; *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXI, *South and Central America; Mexico*, docs. 3-23 on 8-64; CIA memorandum, "Arms Traffic in the Caribbean Area, 1963," 18 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 12097, 1, 5; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Standing Group Meeting...10 December 1963," McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; "OAS to Examine Caracas Charges Against Havana," *New York Times*, 4 December 1963, "OAS Group Finds Cuban Aggression Against Caracas," *New York Times*, 25 February 1964, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~✗~~

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we're in no trouble...[but f]rom a political point of view...it's dynamite." The legal aspect of the dispute posed no problem—Florida courts would handle it—but the principals split over what other action to take. McNamara and JCS chief Taylor wanted to dismiss all Cuban employees at Guantánamo immediately; Robert Kennedy and McCone disagreed, arguing that a mass firing was an overreaction that would hurt the wrong people. The DCI added that it might prompt similar actions against Americans working overseas and that without the economic benefits derived from the base employees' salaries, the Cuban government might make an issue of the paltry rent the United States paid each year (only \$3,000) for the facility. Instead, McCone proposed that "we go in now and cut the water pipes and say that we don't want Castro's water." President Johnson told McNamara that he "couldn't understand McCone. He's pretty hard-nosed, and I just couldn't find out where he was." The president wanted a firmer response and decided that the local workers should be fired. "We're going to make our base independent of Cuba," he told Sen. Richard Russell. The spat petered out in a few weeks. The Florida courts released the fishermen—36 went home and two stayed in Miami—and Castro offered to turn the water back on, but by then the US commander at Guantánamo had had the pipe into the base removed.⁷ ~~XX~~

Despite concern on the NSC in early 1964 that the immediate threat Castro posed was being overblown, the administration launched a massive diplomatic and propaganda campaign in the region, involving CIA assets, to ostracize Cuba. It succeeded; in July 1964, the OAS voted 15-4 to call on member states to break relations and impose economic sanctions on Cuba. (U)

McCone Takes a Stand (U)

McCone saw no point in persisting with tentative approaches. If the administration was too concerned about "noise" to let CIA carry out and take responsibility for a full range of covert actions, "it is not worth proceeding at all,"

he told his senior deputies in January 1964. Underlying McCone's irritation was his bleak view of Cuba's prospects unless the administration adopted a more belligerent policy. He was "convinced that Castro had turned the corner...would very probably grow stronger...[and] was conducting himself in a manner and carrying out provocative acts which had been declared...totally unacceptable to the United States." He told the Special Group that the administration's Cuban program was "in complete disarray," and that the current and proposed list of covert actions "gave Castro maximum grounds for righteous indignation without really accomplishing anything"—partly because "many times...we have had to stand down actions of this type [economic sabotage] in order to avoid raising the noise level." The DCI accordingly "felt that all prohibitions and self-imposed restraints, such as the use of US territory for training of personnel, launching of provocative acts, etc., could be declared void."

I concluded we had one of two courses to follow: either we move in on Castro in the most aggressive possible way, accept attribution and destroy him by acts of violence short of war or including war if necessary, or, as an alternative, live with him in the hope that [P]rovidence might take care of the situation.... I felt the latter was a big gamble.

McCone advised that the United States should undertake this new "dynamic action" after warning Khrushchev and Castro and informing the American people. Speaking for the White House, however, Robert Kennedy said it was futile to discuss what CIA would do until the president and his advisers made the fundamental decision about whether to live with Castro or pursue his downfall.⁸ ~~XX~~

Before the White House decided on its policy, McCone had a flash of insight that foiled a Cuban disinformation operation and delivered a strong blow to the Cuban economy. In early April 1964, he noted reports that Castro was scheming to drive up the price of exported sugar—on which it depended for hard currency—by trying to create the

⁷ CIA Watch Office cable to White House Situation Room, 6 February 1964, MORI doc. no. 98088; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Current Thinking of Cuban Government Leaders," CSDB-3/659,871, 5 March 1964, MORI doc. no. 361968; FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House[,] 7 February 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 7; OCI, "Cuba and the US Naval Base," *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 14 February 1964, 15-16, MORI doc. no. 125099; Jack Valenti (White House aide), "Notes on Meeting in Cabinet Room...February 7, 1964," National Security File, Office of the President File, LBJ Library; CIA Intelligence Information Cable, "Cuban Government Policy Regarding the Guantánamo Naval Base," 18 February 1964, MORI doc. no. 98094; transcripts of Johnson conversations with McNamara on 6 February and Russell on 7 February 1964, *Taking Charge*, 227-28; transcript of Johnson conversation with McNamara on 7 February 1964, Recordings and Transcripts, Tape F64.12, Side A, PNO 3, LBJ Library; Bundy untitled memorandum to the president, 6 March 1964, National Security Files, Country File, Cuba, Overflights, Vol. 1, January 1964-January 1965, LBJ Library; Brands, *The Wages of Globalism*, 41-42; "Johnson and Aides Map Action on Cuba," *Washington Evening Star*, 7 February 1964, and "US Halts Flow of Funds to Cuba at Guantánamo," *New York Times*, 8 February 1964, in Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC. ~~XX~~

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impression that Cuba's next sugar crop would be small because of hurricane damage. McCone suggested that CIA put out an unattributable story exposing the scheme. When additional evidence of Cuban manipulation accumulated during the month [redacted]

[redacted] the Department of State organized briefings and releases of sanitized information that received wide media play. The disclosures caused sugar prices to plummet, and they stayed low for several months. Later in the year, McCone remarked that he was "particularly intrigued with the difficulties the Cubans are having." His idea had cost Cuba tens of millions of dollars, a substantial share of its foreign exchange.⁹ ~~X~~

McCone could win no converts to his all-or-nothing position on the Cuban covert action program. By April 1964, the administration—increasingly preoccupied with Vietnam and reluctant to upset the Soviet Union—decided to stop Agency-controlled sabotage raids and have CIA concentrate on intelligence collection. At a White House review of Cuban operations, McCone described for the president the stark alternatives available to him: deciding whether the United States wanted "to bring about the eventual liquidation of the Castro/communist entourage and the elimination of the Soviet presence from Cuba," partly through large-scale clandestine operations, or to "rely on future events of an undisclosed nature which might accomplish that objective." The DCI contended that the sporadic achievements in sabotage did not test the covert program fairly. He quoted from an Agency operational plan, prepared almost a year before, which stated that "unless all the components of this program are executed in tandem, the individual courses of action are almost certain to be of marginal value.... This is clearly a case where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." McCone met resistance from the principals. Secretary of State Rusk spelled out the potential diplomatic problems that "noisy" sabotage operations would cause; McNamara said the covert program "has no present

chance of success"; and Bundy noted that because developments inevitably would force the administration to turn the operations on and off again, a comprehensive and rigorous program such as McCone urged was not feasible.¹⁰ ~~X~~

In effect, the president and his advisers abandoned the Kennedy objective of ousting Castro and instead sought to harass and contain him. This was a return to the approach used in phase one of Operation MONGOOSE two years before: espionage, economic warfare, and independent sabotage operations by exile groups. The Special Affairs Staff, under Desmond FitzGerald, drew up a comprehensive collection program using expatriate sources, infiltration agents, liaison contacts, legal travelers, refugees, and port watchers.

Training exiles for sabotage missions continued as well, although the likelihood that the administration would

⁸ DCI morning meeting minutes, 15 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 346; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...", 6 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of 5412 Group," 27 February 1964, and Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Special Group (5412) Meeting...on 13 February [1964]," *ibid.*, box 1, folder 8; CIA memorandum, "Spectrum of Courses of Action With Respect to Cuba," 21 February 1964, MORI doc. no. 98089. FitzGerald outlined CIA's proposed program in "Review of Current Program of Covert Action Against Cuba," 27 January 1964, National Security Files, Country File, Cuba, Intelligence, Covert Program, January 1964–June 1965, LBJ Library. ~~X~~

⁹ Karamessines memorandum to FitzGerald, "Cuban Sugar," 9 April 1964, follow-on memoranda from WH Division to Meyer and Helms, 14 and 27 April and 13 May 1964, and Karamessines untitled memorandum to FitzGerald, 10 September 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 1, folder 14; [redacted] vol. 2, 285–86. "The DCI may be interested in knowing of all actions" the US government took to carry out the ploy, Helms wrote about a report summarizing it, "since he sparked this move." ~~X~~

¹⁰ FitzGerald, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House[,] 7 April 1964...Review of Covert Program directed against Cuba" and attached memorandum by McCone dated 8 April 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 8. ~~X~~

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approve any such raids steadily diminished.¹² Through the first half of 1964, the administration had grown more skeptical about backing militant exiles and warned them against staging unauthorized attacks. Policymakers concluded, however, that withdrawing support and severing connections just then was impractical and unwise. The assorted anti-Castro factions were having difficulty obtaining money from non-US sources, and intensive surveillance by US authorities was hampering their freelance operations. At least for now, the administration decided that cutting off backing to the largest recipients—Manuel Artime's Movement to Recover the Revolution (MRR) and Manolo Ray Rivero's Cuban Revolutionary Junta (JURE)—would eliminate a potentially useful weapon against Castro. ~~✗~~

As the autonomous groups' utility diminished, however, the Special Group chose to phase out the official relationship. By June 1964, McCone told visiting journalists that "no exile activities are permitted which violate neutrality laws[,] such as taking off for a raid from United States soil."¹³ The MRR, the Agency's favorite, mounted several raids from third countries—which "the United States Government neither encourages nor discourages," McCone

said—but had its subsidy cut after it created an international controversy in mid-September by mistakenly attacking a Spanish ship. Meanwhile, the JURE built a dismal record that included "violations of the rules of 'autonomy'...major errors in judgment, and...lack of success," according to the Department of State. Manolo Ray "has carried out his projected operations ineptly and carelessly...he has failed in a humiliating and noisy way."¹⁴ McCone thought the exiles' activities would still be useful if brought under greater US control, but the Special Group was too jaded toward them to agree, and the DCI conceded that Artime was "less and less responsive to persuasion [and] constituted a persistent menace." The last raid by either group, an unauthorized MRR attack on a fuel depot, occurred in February 1965, and Artime's organization began disbanding soon after. (Truly autonomous groups—notably Alpha 66 and its spin-off, Commandos L—continued to hit economic targets such as oil facilities, sugar mills, and factories, despite American interdiction efforts.)

¹² Sources for this paragraph and the next are: FitzGerald, "Chronology of Concept of Autonomous Operations..." late July 1964, and Jessup, "Memorandum for the Record...Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 30 July 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; FitzGerald memorandum, "A Reappraisal of Autonomous Operations," 3 June 1964, *Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After*, tab 7, doc. 32; CIA memorandum to the 303 Committee, "Financial Support to the Autonomous Group Headed by Manuel Artime," 16 July 1964, *ibid.*, doc. 33; Thomas, *The Very Best Men*, 309; Corn, 111–15; Rodríguez and Weisman, 139, 143; "Exiles Raid Cuban Port, Attack Mill," *Washington Post*, 14 May 1964, and "US Warns Exiles Not to Raid Cuba," *Baltimore Sun*, 15 May 1964, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 2, HIC; "Cuba: Playing for High Stakes," *Newsweek*, 1 June 1964, Tad Szulc, "Guerra!"—Still the Word in Miami," *New York Times Magazine*, 5 July 1964, United Press International wire service reports A24 and A25, 17 September 1964, "Exiles Here Discontinue Cuba Raids," *Miami News*, 13 March 1965, *ibid.*, box 3; *HSCA Hearings*, vol. 10, 67, 78–79, 140; HS/CSG-2677, HS Files, Job 85-00664R, box 8, folder 2; Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon with Time Officials," 24 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...303 Committee Meeting...24 September [1964]..." *ibid.*, box 1, folder 8; Jessup, minutes of 303 Committee meetings on 18 June, 2, 9, and 30 July, 24 September, 12 November, and 3 December 1964, *ibid.*, folder 7; "Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 7 January 1965," and CIA memorandum to the 303 Committee, "Status of Termination of Manuel Artime's Autonomous Paramilitary Group," 22 March 1965, Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 5412 Special Group/303 Committee Records, January–June 1965; Paterson, "Fixation with Cuba" in *Kennedy's Quest for Power*, 153; Karamessines untitled memorandum to Lawrence K. White (Executive Director-Comptroller), 19 October 1967, ER Files, Job 80R01284A, box 10, folder 2; transcript of McCone testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 75–76, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 19; Chase memorandum to Bundy, "Cuba," 8 February 1965, National Security Files, Country Files, Vol. III, Memoranda December 1964–November 1965, LBJ Library. ~~✗~~

¹³ The administration also tried to scotch assassination planning by the exiles. President Johnson told McCone and Bundy to inform the attorney general that US law enforcement agencies were to prevent such plots from being carried out. Helms memorandum to McCone, "Plans of Cuban Exiles to Assassinate Selected Cuban Government Leaders," 10 June 1964, MORI doc. no. 455856; U. Alexis Johnson's notes of 303 Committee meeting on 18 June 1964, Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 5412 Special Group/303 Committee Records. (U)

¹⁴ John Crimmins (Department of State) memorandum to U. Alexis Johnson, "Continued Assistance to Manolo Ray's JURE..." 18 June 1964, Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 5412 Special Group/303 Committee Records. Emblematic of the group's propensity to blunder was an embarrassing incident in early June 1964, when a British Navy destroyer intercepted Ray and several associates off the coast of the Bahamas while they were on an infiltration mission to Cuba. The party had stopped on a deserted island to make final preparations when the patrolling British vessel appeared nearby. Ray and some of his team tried to escape in a launch, but US military planes—unaware of whom they were shadowing—aided the British in capturing the Cubans. Ray and his compatriots were brought to Nassau and fined on charges of bringing firearms into British territory. They denied that the Agency had any part in their plan. "Ray Regrets 'Delay,'" *New York Times*, 7 June 1964, Drew Pearson radio report, "CIA, Air Force 'Tangle' Over Cuba," WTOP Radio, 13 June 1964, "The Visible CIA," *Nation*, 22 June 1964, and "Cuba War: Story of a Raid That Failed," *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 July 1964, Western Hemisphere—Cuba clipping file, box 3, HIC; Albert E. Carter memorandum to Thomas Hughes (both Department of State), "ARA-Agency Meeting of June 3, 1964," Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, ARA-CIA Weekly Meetings, June 1964. (U)

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Like its predecessor, the Johnson administration sought back-channel diplomatic opportunities to complement its not-so-silent war against Castro. The president hoped that quiet contacts would "keep Castro's temperature and the Caribbean noise level at a low pitch between now and [the] November [election]," a senior NSC staffer wrote in early 1964. At the same time, the administration held out few hopes that an accommodation with Havana was likely—largely for the same domestic political reasons. In the post-assassination climate, given Lee Harvey Oswald's Cuban connections and the new president's need to prove his mettle against Castro, Johnson could not risk appearing "soft" on Cuba. Still, the president did not use Kennedy's death, a Soviet-Cuban trade agreement, or Moscow's pledge to aid Cuba if the United States invaded it, as pretexts for ending the unofficial approaches.¹⁶ (U)

Neither did Castro. A week after the Kennedy assassination, he put out feelers through the same back channel he had used before: his United Nations representative, Carlos Lechuga; his personal aide, René Vallejo; and an American journalist, Lisa Howard. CIA reported in February 1964 that, according to a high-ranking Cuban official, Castro "sincerely desires to enter into negotiation with the United States." Soon after, Howard brought back from Havana a startling offer from the Cuban leader:

Please tell President Johnson that I earnestly desire his election to the Presidency in November.... [I]f there is anything I can do to add to his majority (aside from retiring from politics), I shall be happy to cooperate.... I know that my offer of assistance would be of immense value to the Republicans—so this would remain our secret....

If the President feels it necessary during the campaign to make bellicose statements about Cuba or even to

take some hostile action—if he will inform me, unofficially, that a specific action is required because of domestic political considerations, I shall understand and not take any serious retaliatory action.

The White House did not officially respond to this message, so the hands-off diplomacy continued for several months. In the early summer, Cuban representatives asked the Spanish government to act as a mediator but got no reaction from Washington. In an interview with the *New York Times* in July, Castro offered to stop supporting Latin revolutionaries if the United States halted exile attacks against Cuba. Lastly, Ernesto "Ché" Guevara's visit to the United Nations in December prompted other indirect contacts between the two governments. The Johnson administration did not reach a consensus on what steps to take next, however, and its intermittent pursuit of détente with the Cuban regime stalled.¹⁷ (U)

As when the Kennedy administration dabbled in behind-the-scenes diplomacy, McCone adamantly opposed any agreement that would help Castro stay in power. He does not appear to have been aware of the Cuban leader's offer to "help" Johnson in the upcoming election, but he undoubtedly would have denounced the idea as fantastical and politically disastrous if publicized. In October 1964, McCone strongly disapproved when James Donovan, the lawyer who negotiated the ransoming of the Bay of Pigs prisoners, proposed secretly meeting with the Cuban leader. McCone already had told Rusk that "CIA would oppose approaching Castro for any purpose except to threaten him if he tampered with our U-2's." The DCI justified this refusal to talk by noting that the DDP was convinced that Castro could not remain in power for more than 12 to 18 months. "We would rather keep tightening the squeeze on him" than give Castro some indication that he could bargain with Washington.¹⁸ ~~SECRET~~

¹⁵ The atrophying of the Agency-controlled exile program, and the effect that the administration's distraction with Vietnam had on Cuban field operations, are described in Ayers, chaps. 13–15. See also Carbonell, 250–51. (U)

¹⁶ Walker, "The Johnson Administration and Cuba," 69–70, 75–76; Kornbluh, 12–15; Chase memoranda to Bundy, "Cuba—Item of Presidential Interest," 25 November 1963, "Bill Attwood Activities," 2 December 1963, and "Bill Attwood's Activities," 3 December 1963, and William Attwood (special adviser to the US United Nations delegation) memorandum to Adlai Stevenson (US Permanent Representative to the United Nations), "Latest Cuban developments for your talk with the President," 9 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 890–91, 897–900, 904. In a speech to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 13 December, Premier Nikita Khrushchev declared that "revolutionary Cuba will not remain defenseless if the aggressive militaristic circles of the USA attack it." The Moscow-Havana trade agreement was signed on 21 January 1964 but had been announced earlier. *Ibid.*, note to doc. no. 387, 902. (U)

¹⁷ Chase memoranda to Bundy, "Bill Attwood Activities," 2 December 1963, and "Bill Attwood's Activities," 3 December 1963, and William Attwood memorandum to Stevenson, "Latest Cuban developments for your talk with the President," 9 December 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath*, 897–900, 904; Associated Press wire service report, "Cuban Leader Offered LBJ Help in '64 Campaign," 20 August 1999, story no. a748, Nexis 99-12549594; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Current Thinking of Cuban Government Leaders," CSDB-3/659,871, 5 March 1964, MORI doc. no. 361968; Castro message to Johnson, 12 February 1964, on the National Security Archive Web site at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB18/09-01. (U)

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McCone later advised Bundy that instead of entertaining the idea of rapprochement with Castro and Khrushchev, the administration should "signal" them that "dire consequences" would ensue if a U-2 were shot down over Cuba. For months, the DCI had been concerned that the Soviets' probable turnover of control of surface-to-air missile sites to the Cubans in 1964 raised the odds that a U-2 might be shot down (he presumed Castro's soldiers were more "trigger happy" than Moscow's men). The U-2 flights were essential for finding out what the Soviets were doing in Cuba

Some administration officials wanted to use satellites in place of U-2 flights, but McCone pointed out that unpredictable weather, fixed orbits, and resolution capabilities limited their effectiveness against the Cuban target. He had the use of other platforms examined—drones, balloons, and the A-12—as well as the idea of mounting a satellite camera on an aircraft flying oblique routes. None of those options was adopted.¹⁹

In one of his last exegeses on Cuba, McCone suggested that even though Castro remained in power, US policy overall had succeeded in marginalizing his regime. "Cuba still belongs to Castro," he told a Senate oversight committee in January 1965, notwithstanding major American expenditures since 1960 to create a viable dissident movement. That was only one aspect of the US government's campaign to isolate Havana, however, and McCone believed that Washington had dealt Havana several hard blows by forcing the Soviet Union to withdraw offensive nuclear weapons from Cuba, publicizing Castro's attempts to subvert neighboring

governments, and coordinating an international embargo on the island. In marked contrast to the fears that US policymakers expressed just a few years before, the DCI stated confidently that as of early 1965, Cuba "does not represent any real threat to the security of the United States."²⁰

McCone was not as sanguine about the rest of Latin America, however, and supported embarking on a more energetic clandestine and counterinsurgency program in the region. At the last SGC meeting he attended, on 8 April 1965, he told the members that the "dangers" south of the border required "positive, concerted and prompt action." "[T]here is evidence that a policy decision has been made [in Moscow] to conduct a more aggressive campaign not only in Latin America, but everywhere." At the DCI's behest, Desmond FitzGerald outlined for the SGC a general plan of intelligence collection, training of local security and police services, clandestine interdiction, and deployment of paramilitary strike forces and conventional military units. After hearing CIA's presentation, the SGC called for a full-scale review of communist subversion in Latin America and the effectiveness of current US counterinsurgency programs and for an examination of new ways to assist the security efforts of regional governments.

In a final pronouncement on covert action that he gave a few weeks before leaving office, McCone told Rusk that neither the United States nor its allies were properly organized to combat Soviet- and Chinese-instigated insurgency. McCone said Moscow and Beijing were exploiting the nuclear stalemate to "pursue an aggressive program of politi-

¹⁸ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with Secretary Rusk, 11 February 1964..." McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10. Presumably to better support his policy prescription, McCone relied on the DDP's assessment of Castro's durability instead of the consensus of DI analysts—enunciated in an August 1964 NIE—that Castro would likely retain control for several years. NIE 85-64, "Situation and Prospects in Cuba," 5 August 1964. See also CIA Memorandum, "Staying Power of the Castro Regime," No. 1601/64, 2 July 1964, 1: "The appeal of Castro's revolution is wearing thinner, but Castro himself retains firm control over the instruments of power...there will be further erosion of popular support for his regime over the next year or two...however, we think the chances of an overthrow of the regime or of a major uprising against it during this period will remain slim." FIS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 3, folder 8.

Transfer of the Surface to Air Missile System to Cuba," 18 December 1963, and SNIE 85-2-64, "Likelihood of an Attempted Shoot-Down of a U-2," 2 May 1964; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk—11 October 1964," and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with McGeorge Bundy—13 October 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion at National Security Council meeting...2 May 1964," ibid., box 6, folder 8; idem, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House..." 19 November 1964, ibid., folder 10; PFIAB, "Minutes of Board Meeting of June 4, 1964," 11, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10013, and "Minutes of Board Meeting of October 1 and 2, 1964," 29, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10000, PFIAB Records, NARA. McCone earlier had advised the president that aerial surveillance of Cuba was so essential that taking out the SAM sites had to be considered if they fired at the U-2s. "The President remarked that this would then mean war[,] and I responded that certainly the destruction of the SAM sites would mean war, that the degree of escalation could not be determined in advance. I stated that this was the most ominous situation that confronted us in Cuba in the immediate future. The President made no comment." McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussions with President Johnson at the Johnson Ranch...December 27th[, 1963,]" McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6.

²⁰ Transcript of McCone testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 103, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 19.

²¹ C. G. Moody Jr., "Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Group (CI)...April 8, 1965," McCone Papers, box 1, folder 9.

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cal action, subversion, and insurgency" using proxies throughout the Third World—as the Soviet Union was doing in Latin America with Cuba. He urged that the SGC be revitalized so that it could formulate a coherent program that would involve all relevant US civilian and military agencies as well as US allies in Western Europe, South America, and the Far East. Rusk agreed with McCone's assessment, but nothing was done for the rest of the DCI's tenure. Within a few months of McCone's departure, community analysts judged that "Castro's hold on power is firm" and that "there is virtually no chance of his overthrow in the foreseeable future."²² ~~SECRET~~

The Molehunt Widens (U)

The Kennedy assassination and the defection of KGB officer Yuri Nosenko three months later gave new urgency to the CI Staff's hunt for the Soviet mole that KGB defector Anatoliy Golitsyn alleged had burrowed into the Agency. McCone was put in the position of authorizing one of the most internally divisive security activities CIA ever undertook. The argument connecting the assassination and the defection hinged on the uncertain reliability of Nosenko's assertion that the KGB had had no interest in Lee Harvey Oswald when he defected to the Soviet Union during 1959–62. Nosenko's bona fides had not been established at that point and consequently, Soviet complicity in the killing of John Kennedy could not be ruled out. If the Kremlin had gone so far as to murder the president, it almost certainly would attempt to manipulate the investigation to conceal its involvement. To do so, the Soviets would use the same well-placed asset inside CIA that Golitsyn had described earlier as part of their "strategic deception" program. In addition to purveying disinformation and reporting on how the US government was reacting to the deception, the mole would support the credibility of a false defector sent to report that Oswald had no tie to the KGB. Nosenko suddenly appeared, with an unverifiable legend covering the years Oswald was in the Soviet Union, supposedly having no contact with the KGB. As Golitsyn had warned, some of Nosenko's information on Soviet intelligence activities con-

tradicted his own reporting—including that about a mole. The all-too-convenient timing of this second defection reinforced James Angleton's suspicion that Moscow had penetrated the Agency, and gave the CI Staff chief more reason to pursue Golitsyn's leads about the elusive "Sasha."²³ (U)

For more than two years, McCone had known about Golitsyn's claim that a Soviet mole was inside Langley, and he stayed abreast, through Helms and Angleton, of the most important aspects of the investigations of individual officers during 1962 and 1963.²⁴ McCone did not accept Golitsyn's more extreme allegations—~~SECRET~~

but by mid-1964 he believed the threat of penetration was serious enough to warrant a systematic examination of the most plausible leads with the FBI. Feeding McCone's suspicions were continuing revelations of Soviet agents in Western intelligence services and investigations or arrests of several Americans suspected of or found to be spying for Moscow. After hearing Golitsyn allege that at least five Agency staffers and contractors, and possibly as many as 30, were KGB agents, McCone discussed the matter with J. Edgar Hoover in mid-October. That must have been a tough act of intelligence diplomacy, as Hoover was perturbed that the Agency had let Golitsyn discredit some of the Bureau's best Soviet sources—notably ~~SECRET~~—because they agreed with Nosenko. Nonetheless, the discussion resulted in a project codenamed HONETOL (a compound of "Hoover" and "Anatoliy").²⁵ ~~SECRET~~

From November 1964 until McCone left the Agency five months later, the HONETOL inquiry was run by a six-man committee that included three officers from each organization.²⁶ Angleton and ~~SECRET~~ of the CI Staff and ~~SECRET~~ of the Office of Security represented CIA; Assistant Director William Sullivan, liaison officer Sam Papich, and counterintelligence chief Donald Moore were the FBI's members. The CI Staff's Special Investigations Group under ~~SECRET~~ did the Agency's share of the work. ~~SECRET~~ senior CIA officers were investigated, and ~~SECRET~~ of those were closely

²² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...", 18 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16; NIE 85-65, "Cuba," 19 August 1965, 1. ~~SECRET~~

²³ David Robarge, "Moles, Defectors, and Deceptions: James Angleton and CIA Counterintelligence," *Journal of Intelligence History* 3, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 40–41. (U)

²⁴ The most thorough classified treatment of the molehunt is ~~SECRET~~ Open source treatments, which rely heavily on interviews with ex-Agency employees and declassified documents, are Mangold, chaps. 17, 18, 20; Wise, *Molehunt*, chaps. 12–15; Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors*, chap. 9, and Riebling, chap. 11. ~~SECRET~~

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scrutinized. McCone kept up with the general outlines of the molehunt but let Helms, Angleton [] run CIA's part in it without supervising them closely. ~~XX~~

Interagency wrangles over resources soon impeded HONETOL. [] has said that McCone would have been willing to "go to the mat" with Hoover to keep the joint activities going, but the DCI chose to expend his energies in his latter days on other issues such as Vietnam and NRO. After five meetings of the HONETOL committee between November 1964 and February 1965, the FBI concluded that Golitsyn was "a disruptive individual, seized with the overall theory of penetration and not above fabricating to support his theories," and the joint investigation ended. No mole was found at CIA during McCone's directorship. ²⁷ ~~XX~~

Burnishing the Agency's Image (U)

During the first several months of the Johnson administration, McCone became noticeably more sensitive that CIA's popular image as a derring-do organization was losing its glamour and becoming a political liability to him and the Agency. He believed that Allen Dulles and some Kennedy administration officials had built up CIA's covert action capability at the expense of other functions, such as espionage and analysis—so much so, he told the president, with some overstatement, that "my contribution...was impaired, travel is difficult, [and] visiting foreign countries is practically an impossibility[,] all to the end [that] neither the DCI

nor the Agency were serving the President as effectively as they could." Johnson agreed, telling McCone that he "wanted to do everything possible to get me out of the cloak and dagger business...[and] was tired that a situation had been built up that every time my name or CIA's name was mentioned, it was associated with a dirty trick." Instead, the president preferred to emphasize CIA's reporting and estimating functions and minimize public attention to its secret operations. ²⁸ ~~XX~~

Although the alluring "spymaster" persona was ill-suited to a staid, blue-suit executive like McCone, he had difficulty shedding it at a time when James Bond books and movies captivated millions of people and US intelligence services spent billions of dollars on clandestine activities. Warning his senior deputies in December 1963 that "the year ahead will be a rough one for CIA," the DCI grew more worried about the Agency's image as his relationship with the president worsened. By avoiding embarrassing disclosures and fashioning a less controversial reputation for the Agency, McCone hoped to retain his and CIA's influence in the media-obsessed Johnson White House. ²⁹ ~~XX~~

McCone launched this public relations offensive in January 1964 by informing his senior staff of his "desire to create an 'image' of CIA" that emphasized its "statutory responsibility" for analysis and support to policymakers rather than clandestine operations that critics portrayed as improper, ineffective, and unauthorized. "This is entirely wrong, both with respect to the activity and the coordination and con-

²⁵ Transcript of McCone-Golitsyn meeting, 11 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 7; transcript of McCone meeting with Golitsyn, Helms, and Angleton, 16 July 1964, *ibid.*, folder 11; "Golitsyn," 38; [] index of DCI meeting memoranda, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12; Riebling, 221–26. The most significant case of Soviet penetration of a Western service revealed around this point in McCone's directorship was Colonel Stig Wennerstrom, a senior official at the Swedish Ministry of Defense. Between mid-1963 and mid-1964, at least five cases of Soviet espionage by US military personnel and a defense contractor had resulted in arrests or were under investigation. CIA graphics, "Key Soviet Agents, Defectors, and Illegals, 1945 to the Present," product no. 562361 3–77, and "Key Soviet Agents and Illegals, 1945 to the Present," product no. 575590 4–78, copies in History Staff; Jenson, 41–42; Taylor and Snow, appendix. []

[] Wright, 203; West, 107ff. ~~XX~~

²⁶ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: "Golitsyn," 38; [] and the above-cited portions of the books by Wise, Mangold, and Riebling. ~~XX~~

²⁷ In July 1965, Hoover ordered the Bureau to break off contact with Golitsyn, but the molehunt continued at CIA, with the defector remaining the key source of information. Most of the investigations of wrongly accused officers occurred after McCone left. Golitsyn was correct that the Soviets had a mole in the Agency, but he turned out not to be as senior or as damaging as feared. []

²⁸ McCone memoranda about discussions with the president on 7 and 27 December 1963, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 6; *idem*, memorandum about meeting with the president on 20 February 1964, *ibid.*, folder 7. ~~XX~~

²⁹ Carter memorandum to Kirkpatrick, Cline, and Helms, 30 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 19, folder 7; DCI morning meeting minutes for 16 December 1963, *ibid.*, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345. ~~XX~~

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trol, and I wish to attempt to change this image." McCone wanted this effort carefully managed to prevent a recurrence of the "CIA press conference" flap described in Chapter 10. After that incident, McCone established a public relations committee under the chairmanship of Lyman Kirkpatrick, with Ray Cline, Richard Helms, and Paul Chretien of OPA as members. He charged the committee with reviewing and approving all Agency activities with the media, including press notices and background briefings. He further directed CIA not to publicly circulate estimates, analyses, and reports in its own name and instead to coordinate information releases with the Department of State and the White House. Otherwise, he declared, "I wish absolutely no contact whatsoever, no comments, no discussions with the press except with my personal authorization."³⁰

In addition to instituting the image enhancement campaign, McCone fought back at the Agency's critics in Congress and the media. In a private moment of extreme pique, he told a long-time supporter, Sen. Stuart Symington, that "I am not going to stand for a lot of sons of bitches like your friend [Sen. Eugene] McCarthy...who want to destroy the thousands of people here and what this organization does...." "Either I am going to get this thing stopped[,]

by God[,] or I am going to resign and go out and fight for this organization." After venting to Symington, McCone relaxed a bit and agreed with the senator that a better

approach would be to pass intelligence information to CIA's allies on the Hill—such as Symington, Thomas Dodd, John Stennis, and Henry Jackson—and approach them about using the material in speeches defending the Agency.³¹

Two months later, McCone set up what in effect was a media "watch committee." He told Marshall Carter "to get a group together whose job it will be to devote constant effort and attention, on a daily basis, to the task of positioning ourselves better to refute, promptly and effectively, false accusations levied against the Agency in the press and in the Congress." McCone "attached great urgency" to this effort. Members of the task force were drawn from the DDP, the Offices of Legislative Counsel and General Counsel, BNE, OCI, and the CI Staff. The group initially compiled the eight or ten principal charges usually levied against CIA and then prepared rebuttals for dissemination to the media and Congress as the occasion arose.³²

McCone vividly displayed his defensiveness about CIA's image by the outrage he felt over the book *The Invisible Gov-*



A contemporary depiction of the "cloak and dagger" image of intelligence that McCone sought to dispel (U)

A scene from the movie *The Adventuress*

³⁰ McCone, "Memorandum for the File...Recent CIA Publicity," and "Memorandum: Handling of Publicity," 13 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 10; McCone memorandum to CIA Executive Committee, "Agency Relations with News Media," 16 January 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 1, folder 13. In a letter to the chairman of PFIAB, Clark Clifford, McCone partly blamed Chretien for the "press conference" foul-up, describing the recently appointed public affairs chief as being "not as sensitive to the tricky problem of press relationships as a more experienced press officer might have been." McCone letter to Clifford, 16 January 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122.

³¹ Transcript of McCone telephone conversations with Symington and Dodd, 5 and 18 February 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 5. James Reston of the *New York Times* similarly suggested to Helms that the Agency try to alleviate reporters' instinctive suspicion of secret agencies by providing them with unattributable information. Doing so, Reston advised, would give journalists a sense that CIA was "attempting to be cooperative." Helms memorandum, "Talk with Mr. James Reston...", 27 January 1964, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2.

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ernment by journalists David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. After learning of plans for its publication in mid-1964, he and several senior lieutenants orchestrated an aggressive damage-preemption and damage-control campaign to suppress and discredit the book, which sharply criticized CIA and the DCI. This effort at nonlegal prior restraint would be the Agency's most forceful ever against anyone other than former employees.³³ McCone's reaction contrasted markedly with his tempered response to *CIA: The Inside Story* by American journalist Andrew Tully, which appeared two years before. At that time, the DCI opposed having an Agency officer publicly rebut Tully's book, which at its worst was only mildly disapproving and left some readers impressed with the scope and scale of CIA's enterprises. He judged that refuting the book only would draw attention to it, stimulate sales, and further damage CIA.³⁴ By 1964, however, McCone had become much more thin-skinned about criticism of CIA, wanted to prevent injury to the Agency's standing within the administration, and believed that *The Invisible Government* contained many more harmful allegations and revealed far more sensitive information than Tully's work. ~~XX~~

Wise, the Washington bureau chief of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and Ross, a correspondent for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, were among the first prominent practitioners of "investigative journalism" and already were notorious at Langley for their 1962 book *The U-2 Affair*, about the shootdown of Francis Gary Powers's spyplane. The Agency's in-house publication, *Studies in Intelligence*, described that "exposé" as "another of the recent spate of books which purport to reveal the inside story of secret operations and which gain some credence as authentic while intermingling fact and fiction without distinguishing between them."³⁵ Two years later, Wise and Ross followed up with *The Invisible Government*, which contained over 350 pages of extensive

detail about CIA covert actions in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Europe; the workings of NSA and DIA; and the Kennedy administration's national security apparatus. The book was more than just reportage, however; it argued that a secret cadre of officials from the White House, the Departments of Defense and State, and the Intelligence Community ran American foreign policy without accountability to Congress and the public. "[T]his shadow government is shaping the lives of 190,000,000 Americans...out of public view...without the knowledge of our elected representatives," according to Wise and Ross.³⁶ (U)

The book was not flattering to McCone personally ("When he smiles," a CIA man cautioned, "look out."), but what especially riled him was the premise of the title: that the NSC's entity for reviewing covert actions, known as the Special Group or the 303 Committee, was, in his words, "a sinister and powerful organization existing outside the channels of authority." McCone believed that to achieve their purpose of discrediting covert action, Wise and Ross had to attack the Special Group/303 Committee, and to do that, they had to target the DCI by depicting him as the behind-the-scenes leader of the US government's hidden foreign policy elite. As one of the Agency's internal reviews phrased the authors' contention, "the organization set up to control CIA's covert action mission has become a prisoner of John McCone and CIA, head and heart of the 'invisible government.'" Besides that ominous-sounding thesis, the information in the book, the DCI wrote, was "dramatized in a most slanted manner," and, whether it had been published previously or not, "the assembly of all of it under one cover" caused "great damage" to the United States by giving its adversaries fodder for their propaganda.³⁷ ~~XX~~

McCone further contended that tell-all books like *The Invisible Government* were ahistorical and conceptually

³² DCI morning meeting minutes for 5 February 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 346; Karamessines memorandum to Angleton, 5 February 1964, "Refutation of False Accusations Against CIA in the Press and in the Congress," DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 1, folder 19. In December 1963, McCone had his deputies look into planting letters in American newspapers to rebut criticisms of CIA. DCI morning meeting minutes for 16 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folders 345. McCone's mounting antagonism toward the press had definite limits, however, and did not induce him to violate the Agency's charter. For example, he refused a Johnson White House request that CIA maintain files on nearly two dozen newspaper columnists. DCI morning meeting minutes for 5 February 1964 (cited above). ~~XX~~

³³ The Agency did not take such concerted action against an author again until in the early 1970s, when it twice went to court to prevent ex-officer Victor Marchetti from publishing a magazine article, and to force him to remove classified information from a book he was writing. The two cases upheld the legitimacy of the secrecy agreement CIA requires employees to sign. See John S. Warner, "The Marchetti Case: New Case Law," *Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 1-12. The Agency had no such leverage to use against Wise and Ross, and US espionage statutes had not been invoked against the media. (U)

³⁴ McCone memorandum to Sherman Kent, 5 October 1962, McCone Papers, box 1, folder 14. ~~XX~~

³⁵ John S. Warner, review of *The U-2 Affair*, *Studies* 6, no. 3 (Fall 1962): A45. (U)

³⁶ Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, quote from the dust jacket. (U)

³⁷ Wise and Ross, *The Invisible Government*, profile of McCone on 192-97, quote on 192; McCone untitled memorandum, 5 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Paul Chretien, "Report on the Wise and Ross Book, *The Invisible Government*," 10 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 14. ~~XX~~

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flawed. They portrayed the Agency's energetic use of covert action in the past as the current reality, whereas in relative terms CIA was now more heavily involved in collection and analysis than ever before—in good measure because of his own initiatives. Lastly, McCone believed that Wise and Ross had deceived him. After meeting with them about their book in August 1963, he invited them back to discuss their work with him as it progressed, and requested that they submit the manuscript for a fact-check and security review. They did neither, and as recently as late April 1964, Wise saw the DCI but did not mention the by-then-completed book.³⁸ ~~X~~

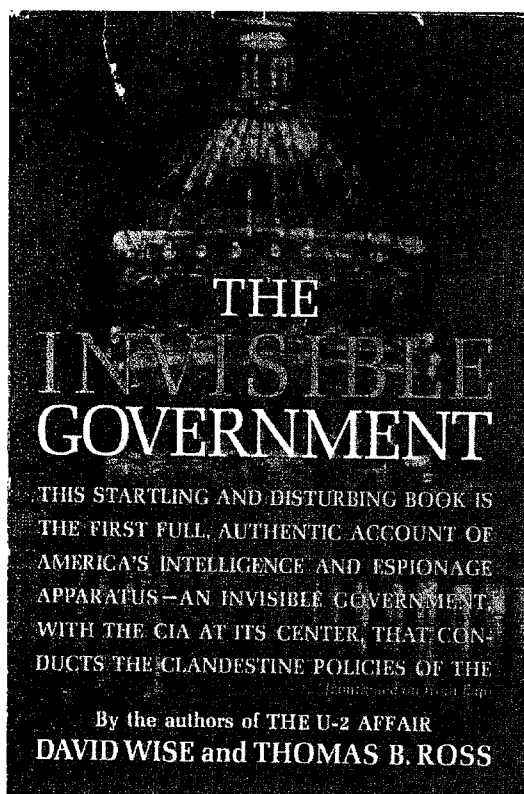
Consequently, an infuriated McCone tried to prevent the publication of *The Invisible Government*. First, he needed to show that the book seriously harmed the nation's security and was so riddled with errors that it should not be foisted on an unwitting public. Armed with a "bootleg" copy of the uncorrected galley proofs, he convened an Agency task force—with members drawn from the DDP, DI, and DS&T, the Office of Security, NIPE, the IG, the General Counsel and Legislative Counsel, BNE, and OPA—to scrutinize the book for mistakes, security compromises, and legal violations. The OPA staff conducted a separate, more detailed content analysis. McCone also directed that every Agency officer mentioned in the book comment on the accuracy of the references about him.³⁹ ~~X~~

The task force and OPA inquiries found that *The Invisible Government* contained over 200 "significant inaccuracies" and at least 120 "significant security disclosures" of cover organizations, clandestine personnel, operational details, or component functions—half of them revealed for the first time, and one-tenth of them previously known but still considered sensitive. Overall, the two studies concluded, the book represented more of a public relations problem than a breach of security. The OPA analysis stated that:

The cumulative impact of the old material combined with the new, presented in a low-keyed setting that has the aura of authenticity, and under the guise of two crusading writers taking on an undemocratic organization, will do untold harm to the Agency, at home and abroad.... [T]he Communists will certainly use this book to discredit CIA throughout the world.... [T]he book is in a class by itself in being the most accurate of its kind ever in stripping bare the Government's most closely guarded

secrets....[It] will further discredit us among the American people...[and] contribute to the decline of CIA.⁴⁰ ~~X~~

The task force suggested exerting quiet pressure on the book's publisher to halt publication or remove sensitive ref-



Cover of the first edition of *The Invisible Government* (U)

³⁸ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with *New York Times*...29 June 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President, 20 May [1964]..." *ibid.*, box 6, folder 8; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Gardner Cowles (*Look*), J.H. Whitney (*New York Herald Tribune*), Robert D. Loomis (Random House), Robert Manning (Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs), and David Wise, 5, 7, and 11 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 6; McCone letter to Cowles, 7 May 1964, and transcript of McCone meeting with Wise and Ross, 15 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 10; McCone letter to Loomis, 5 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 14; PFIAB, "Minutes of Board Meeting of June 4, 1964," 16, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10013, PFIAB Records, NARA. ~~X~~

³⁹ McCone untitled memorandum, 5 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11; Parrott, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the DCI," 4 May 1964, Chretien memoranda to McCone, "Task Force on *The Invisible Government*," 4 May 1964, and "Report on the Wise and Ross Book, *The Invisible Government*," 10 May 1964, and Knoche untitled memorandum to Carter, 6 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 14; DCI morning meeting minutes for 6 May 1964, *ibid.*, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 347; several task force memoranda in History Staff Miscellaneous Studies, No. MISC 13.14, "The Invisible Government." ~~X~~

⁴⁰ Chretien memoranda to McCone, "Task Force on *The Invisible Government*," 4 May 1964, and "Report on the Wise and Ross Book, *The Invisible Government*," 10 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 14. ~~X~~

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ferences and using covert assets and sympathetic journalists to secure unfavorable reviews. No one thought legal action against the authors was justified, although McCone suggested that the writer of another book with the same title "be advised very discreetly to bring suit" against Wise and Ross for copyright infringement. Some task force members thought that because so many facts in *The Invisible Government* had already appeared in open sources, the Agency's options were limited and that questioning only some points would be misinterpreted as confirming the rest. Richard Helms, however, wanted the Agency to take a tough approach, writing to McCone separately that publication of *The Invisible Government* should be stopped if possible. "This book is a classic case of the whole being a far more damaging security erosion than the individual parts which compose it." It was, Helms believed, based on a "philosophy [that] is equivalent to saying that our activities should not exist." The Office of Security tried to find out if Wise and Ross had contacted current or former Agency employees during their research, but, as had been determined in previous cases of this sort, the book's information was so widely held throughout the Intelligence Community that specific sources could not be identified.⁴¹ ~~XX~~

After the substantive review of *The Invisible Government* was done, McCone took several steps to get it spiked or revised. He forewarned the president of the book's potential for harm and suggested that Johnson refute the "shadow elite" notion at a press conference. According to McCone, "the President expressed regret that the book was published [and] discouragement over the license of government officials with the press, but didn't seem to know what to do about it." With the media starting to snipe at the administration over Vietnam, Johnson did not want to get into a First Amendment wrangle with journalists and publishers—least of all with CIA as the focus. The DCI tried to convince *Look* not to serialize the book because it contained "totally

and maliciously distorted" interpretations and "philosophically...is just as screwy as it can be." "[It] gives to the Soviet propagandists and people like [Ghanaian president Kwame] Nkrumah and [Indonesian president] Sukarno and people like that just a speech for every night." *Look's* publisher, Gardner Cowles, thought McCone was "unduly agitated" about material that had already appeared in print but allowed Helms to review the second installment (the first had already run) and suggest deletions.⁴² ~~XX~~

McCone and Carter also complained about *The Invisible Government* to its publisher, Random House, and to the publisher of the newspaper that employed Wise, the *New York Herald Tribune*. To the former, McCone passed on—no doubt agreeing with—the purported observation of Dean Rusk that "if the author wrote a memorandum putting everything that's in that book and delivered it to the Soviet Embassy, we could put him in jail for life...." McCone called and met with Wise and Ross to convince them to correct errors and remove statements "that would be damaging to the national interest," and he considered having the Agency buy all copies of the first edition if the publisher agreed to some deletions. The authors stood by their work, and the president of Random House, Bennett Cerf, replied that he would be glad to sell the first printing to the Agency, after which he would order another edition printed, and then another, and so on. CIA's pressure on the publishers had no effect. The book came out unchanged and soon rose to the top of the best seller lists—a "gold nugget" for Wise and Ross, as McCone had feared.⁴³ ~~XX~~

After *The Invisible Government* was published, McCone acted to gauge and limit its effect. Acting on prior instructions, DDP stations and bases avoided giving the book further publicity or credence by attacking it; when feasible, discouraged its publication, sales, and distribution in their host countries; planted or stimulated critical reviews in local

⁴¹ DCI morning meeting minutes for 27 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 347; Helms memorandum to McCone, "The Invisible Government," *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 14; [redacted] memorandum of meeting with Thomas Mann, 10 June 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 11. McCone believed, but could not prove, that Wise and Ross got much of their information from CIA's rivals in the Department of State and Department of Defense. Transcript of McCone telephone conversation with Sen. Leverett Saltonstall, 20 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6. ~~XX~~

⁴² McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President, 20 May [1964]...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 8; transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Cowles, 5 and 11 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 10, folder 6. *Look* ran the serialization in its 16 and 30 June 1964 issues (vol. 28, no. 12, 37 et seq., and no. 13, 77 et seq.). ~~XX~~

⁴³ Transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Whitney, Loomis, Manning, and Wise, 5, 7, and 11 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6; Knoche untitled memorandum to Kirkpatrick, 6 May 1964, Cowles telegram to McCone, 6 May 1964, and McCone letter to Cowles, 7 May 1964, *ibid.*; transcript of McCone meeting with Wise and Ross, 15 May 1964, *ibid.*, box 7, folder 10; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Meeting with Mr. Gardner Cowles," 12 May 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 2, folder 12; Carter memorandum about conversation with Loomis, 8 May 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 16; David Wise, *The American Police State*, 198–99; McCone untitled memorandum, 5 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11. The original edition of *The Invisible Government* appeared in June 1964; by September, it was in its fifth printing and had reached the number one or two spot on the most important best seller lists; and a paperback version was published in July 1965. Walter Pforzheimer memorandum to Chretien, "The Invisible Government," David Wise book review file, folder 1, History Staff. ~~XX~~

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media; and reported communist-sponsored attempts to exploit it. McCone had copies and a critique of the book given to all members of CIA's congressional oversight committees, and had OPA create a central repository of foreign and domestically published material in which Agency personnel and activities were identified or compromised. Several months later, McCone asked BNE for an account of how other countries had used *The Invisible Government* for political or intelligence advantage. Nkrumah reportedly was "much impressed" by it; Sukarno had ordered copies sent to his cabinet; and Pakistani president Ayub Khan was "shocked" and hoped nothing such as the book described was going on in his country. In the American press, according to OPA, two-thirds of the negative coverage stressed that CIA was out of control and a threat to democracy, while one-third played up Agency ineptitude. In addition, McCone declared that "I want to attack the book in the reviews" and had a statement drafted that would serve as the basis for critiques by CIA contacts in the media and the publishing industry. A few of those Agency-generated appraisals eventually appeared.⁴⁴ ~~SECRET~~

All these Seventh Floor fulminations only made the situation worse. They antagonized CIA contacts in journalism and publishing, and contributed to the increasingly adversarial relationship between the US government and the media over national security issues. In addition, McCone's misdirected determination to prevent CIA from getting bad press resulted in more negative coverage, not less. Not surprisingly, the "spiking" story leaked, resulting in First-Amendment-invoking headlines such as "McCone Tried to Stop New Book" and "Furious McCone Wages War on Book." McCone inadvertently had added a new twist to Wise and Ross's tale: CIA not only was sinister, but also undemocratic.⁴⁵ (U)

After several months, McCone's ire abated. Although he strongly believed that *The Invisible Government* had hurt the national interest, he concluded that its overdrawn premise about (in his words) a "monstrous, uncontrolled, secret action group" undercut the author's credibility. From the standpoint of the DCI and the Agency, it would have been better if he had reached that conclusion sooner and followed his previous policy of media disengagement, letting whatever hue and cry the book caused to subside on its own. In his judgment, however, at that time in that administration, a more combative stance was called for. Moreover, media savvy was not a forte of his. As it turned out, McCone and the Agency wasted their indignation: There was no sign that *The Invisible Government* affected the White House's regard for him and CIA one way or the other.⁴⁶ ~~SECRET~~

Despite that experience, McCone stayed in the media fray as exposés of CIA multiplied. One of the more discomfiting among them was *The Bay of Pigs: The Leaders' Story of Brigade 2506*, by Haynes Johnson of the Washington *Evening Star*, which appeared in mid-1964. Written with the collaboration of leaders of the anti-Castro resistance, it contained a startling allegation that seemed to substantiate the "invisible government" idea and caused McCone to order an internal investigation into the source of the leak. According to Johnson, a CIA field officer known as "Colonel Frank"—true name [redacted]—told members of the Agency's Cuban proxy brigade that his superiors at Langley had directed him to disobey administration orders to suspend the landing at the Bay of Pigs. With the Wise-Ross book selling so well, McCone could not allow the charge that CIA would contravene a White House command to go un rebutted.⁴⁷ (U)

The in-house inquiry that McCone convened found no evidence that then-DCI Allen Dulles, then-DDCI Charles

⁴⁴ DCI morning meeting minutes for 4 and 15 June and 9 September 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folders 347 and 348; [redacted] both titled "Adverse Publicity...*The Invisible Government*..." 28 May and 24 July 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 11; Kirkpatrick memorandum to Deputy Directors et al., Action Memorandum No. 392, "Centralization of Information on Published References to Agency Activities and Personnel," 19 June 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 2, folder 3; transcript of telephone conversation between Carter and McCone, 6 June 1964, and Chretien memorandum to McCone, "Press References to *The Invisible Government*," *ibid.*, box 13, folder 14. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁵ Associated Press wire service report, 9 June 1964, copy in DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 2, folder 14; "CIA Effort to Censor Book Told; Publisher Tells of Calls from McCone, Aide," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 9 June 1964, "Furious McCone Wages War on Book," *Miami Herald*, 14 June 1964, and "McCone Tried to Stop New Book on CIA; Attempt to Hold Up Magazine Articles Is Also Disclosed," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 18 June 1964, OPA Files, Job 81-00468R, box 9, folder 3; and numerous similar press reports in Wise book review file, folder 3. (U)

McCone's order about how securely BNE's analysis of *The Invisible Government* should be handled suggests that he believed the only thing worse than an exposé was a leak about an official investigation of an exposé. He wanted the BNE report treated as "a most confidential and privileged in-house document...[that] should not be disclosed to anyone outside of the immediate small group in the Agency....[T]he article is commendable, but could do irreparable damage to the Agency in connection with its relationship with the press and the public if improperly handled." McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 23 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁶ Carter untitled memorandum to Helms, 8 January 1965, and McCone letter to Tom Braden, 25 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 16, folder 4; transcript of McCone meeting with Joseph Alsop, 13 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Wise, *American Police State*, 199–200; Charles E. Valpey (pseud.), review of *The Invisible Government*, *Studies* 8, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 106–9. ~~SECRET~~

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P. Cabell, or any other senior Agency official ordered participants in the Bay of Pigs operation to ignore specific directives or general policy guidance. [] denied under oath that he said what the book claimed he had. However, according to the inquiry, some Agency field officers thought the incident Johnson recounted very likely had occurred because "Colonel Frank had shown himself to be a wild man quite capable of making the statements attributed to him." The investigation attributed discrepancies in participants' recollections to personal misimpressions, overzealous attempts to inflate morale, and language difficulties. McCone told PFIAB in June that the inquiry "turned up only an instance or two where in the heat of the operations statements were made to the effect that the operation was ready and nothing could make it fail." Despite the Agency's fears—which the flap over *The Invisible Government* probably intensified—*The Bay of Pigs* did not create much of a stir.⁴⁸ ~~SECRET~~

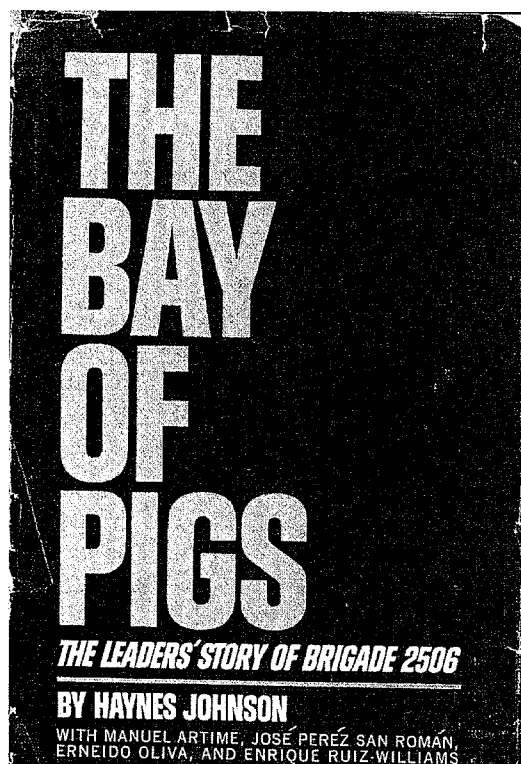
McCone involved himself with another piece of journalism about the Bay of Pigs around this time—a proposed article by Mario Lazo, a prominent Cuban exile writer, in *Reader's Digest*. At the DCI's request, Helms showed Lazo's draft to McGeorge Bundy and said CIA was "anxious to see an end to these pieces which simply con-

trived to keep waving a 'bloody shirt' we would like to see buried." The DDP told Bundy that Kirkpatrick was going to try to get Lazo to withdraw the manuscript because its sympathetic tone toward CIA might suggest that the Agency was involved in its preparation. After reading the draft,

Bundy said, "If you can knock off the article by a telephone call or by a meeting with the author, fine. If not, I do not propose that we take any further action. After all, this article is no worse than others which have appeared." Bundy's response suggests the White House did not believe that CIA's image was as easily tarnished as McCone thought, or that the costs of regularly intruding into the publishing process outweighed the benefits.⁴⁹ ~~SECRET~~

Nevertheless, on two occasions in mid- to late-1964, McCone dealt with two potentially troublesome articles in *Time*. In early June, the periodical told of an alleged CIA operation against Cuba launched from Miami. Soon after, McCone met with *Time-Life* publisher Henry Luce, who had heard that the DCI was "very annoyed" with *Time's* "totally false" story that the Agency had supported an infiltration attempt by the Cuban exile

group JURE led by Manolo Ray Rivero. With the administration sharply reducing its support to the anti-Castro ex-patriates, claims that the Agency was still working with them



Dust jacket of the first edition of *The Bay of Pigs* (U)

⁴⁷ Johnson wrote that "[Colonel] Frank never said who [in the Kennedy administration] opposed the invasion.... He did say that if he received the order to stop the invasion, 'I have also orders from my bosses, my commanders, to continue anyway.'" *The Bay of Pigs*, 76. The back of the book's dust jacket promised that the brigade's commanders would "reveal the whole truth about...[the CIA's] secret plans to countermand White House decisions." One of the Agency's journalistic contacts, Charles Murphy, advised OPA that he thought *The Bay of Pigs* was "more destructive" to the Agency than *The Invisible Government*. Johnson presented credible detail about a well-known operational failure, whereas "a good deal" of what Wise and Ross wrote was "preposterous." Murphy letter to Stanley J. Grogan, 14 May 1964, MORI doc. no. 31068. (U)

⁴⁸ [] memorandum to Helms, "Investigation of Certain Allegations Made in the Book, 'The Bay of Pigs,'" 28 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 4, folder 8; FitzGerald memorandum to Helms, "Haynes Johnson Book 'Bay of Pigs,'" 13 May 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 2, folder 12; Kirkpatrick review of *The Bay of Pigs*, *Studies* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1964): 105; PFIAB, "Minutes of Board Meeting of June 4, 1964," 16, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10013, PFIAB Records, NARA. ~~SECRET~~

⁴⁹ Helms, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Mr. Bundy re Lazo Manuscript," 22 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 13, folder 2; Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Discussion with Dr. Mario Lazo Regarding His Potential Article for the *Reader's Digest*...", 21 May 1964, Lyman Kirkpatrick Collection, Section C, NARA. ~~SECRET~~

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"on the side" could be politically explosive. Drawing from a memorandum prepared by WH Division, McCone persuaded Luce to "investigate [the article] thoroughly." The story stood, but in spite of its "rogue agency" theme, it did not capture the interest of the White House, and the DCI's records do not indicate any follow-up on the matter.⁵⁰ ~~X~~

Another *Time* piece in October 1964 hit closer to home. CIA reportedly had conducted field investigations on several of the president's closest aides (Bill Moyers, Jack Valenti, George Reedy, and Walter Jenkins) before granting them a special clearance. Concerned that Johnson would think the Agency had insulted his trusted advisers or perhaps even thought they might be security risks, McCone wrote to the president directly about his "distress" over the *Time* story. He tried to assure Johnson that CIA had never considered investigating the aides, and that he had ordered the clearances issued to them. McCone added that he could only get the *Time* writer to admit that the source of information was not a CIA employee. No detectable sentiment issued from the White House—indicating again that McCone was far more anxious about the Agency's public relations than he needed to be.⁵¹ ~~X~~

Besides trying to induce writers and publishers to modify or withdraw unfavorable books and articles, McCone also contemplated legal action against them if a strong enough case could be made. He took some encouragement from a New York State Supreme Court decision in 1964 that enjoined the movie production company Twentieth Century-Fox from showing the comedy film *John Goldfarb, Won't You Please Come Home?* because it misappropriated the name of the University of Notre Dame and thereby discredited the school. The court placed a similar injunction on the publishers of the book on which the movie was based. McCone told the Agency's general counsel to obtain a full record of the case and follow the appeals "as it might be that law is being made...which will be extremely useful to us in restraining authors, as well as TV and motion picture pro-

ducers in the improper use of CIA for monetary benefits." Agency records do not indicate if any legal action resulted from McCone's idea while he was DCI.⁵² (U)

Along with trying to curtail journalists' discussion of CIA, McCone ordered Agency executives "to reduce press contacts to an absolute minimum" and named "controversial figures [in the media] who should be avoided altogether." The strategy that McCone, Helms, Chretien, and John Bross of NIPE developed in early 1965 for dealing with NBC's proposed documentary on CIA put that attitude into practice. In February 1964, NBC had broadcast a *White Paper* program on the Bay of Pigs affair that criticized the Agency, so the DCI and his deputies were on their guard when they heard that the network was preparing another documentary about CIA.⁵³ They decided that the Agency would not collaborate officially on the program (including not allowing filming on the Headquarters compound) but would afford "unofficial, unattributable" assistance to NBC in making contacts and organizing information. Current CIA managers would encourage former officers such as Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell to appear on the program or provide background interviews. Helms wrote that "[t]his is the only device open to us for keeping the show from being overloaded with commentary from such critics as David Wise...[or] Andrew Tully...." (McCone declined to be interviewed; he cited his policy against speaking in public, and disingenuously claimed that because he "was not so sure that the hostile attitudes toward the Agency were serious or were hurting [it]," there was no point in him appearing on television.) Lastly, CIA permitted two Chinese defectors to be interviewed, and arranged for the release of U-2 photographs during the Cuban missile crisis and of the Soviet Union before 1960. "Since such material [aerial photography] has been used on TV before," Helms wrote, "it can hardly be regarded as a violation of security and would do much to get into the program an aspect of intelligence collection which is dramatic and effective."⁵⁴ ~~X~~

⁵⁰ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Luncheon Meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Luce...12 June 1964," and FitzGerald, "Memorandum...Manuel Ray [and] *Time* Magazine Article of 12 June 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 11. ~~X~~

⁵¹ McCone letter to President Johnson, 20 October 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 4, folder 16. ~~X~~

⁵² McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 18 December 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5. The movie finally opened in March 1965. Reviews in the *Washington Daily News* and the *Washington Post*, 31 March 1965, OPA Files, Job 88-01365R, box 2, folder 5. (U)

⁵³ Like Haynes Johnson's book, the *White Paper* program caused scant controversy outside Langley. JMWAVE reported, for example, that it had no problems dealing with its Cuban expatriate assets after the telecast, even though the program concluded that trying to oust Castro was futile. The station thought, however, that it might temporarily have trouble recruiting new exile operatives. WAVE 1813, 11 February 1964, OPA Files, Job 88-01365R, box 2, folder 6. ~~X~~

⁵⁴ Numerous memoranda by Chretien and [redacted] during December 1964–February 1965, OPA Files, Job 88-01365R, box 2, folders 5 and 6; DCI morning meeting minutes for 27 January 1965, ER Files, Job 80B01580R, box 17, folder 349; Helms memorandum to McCone, "Proposed NBC TV Program," 27 January 1965, *ibid.*, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 6. ~~X~~

NBC broadcast the program, *The Science of Spying*, on 4 May 1965, less than a week after McCone stepped down. The mistitled documentary had a narrower scope than Agency executives had thought, dealing only with CIA covert actions in Iran, Guatemala, Indonesia, Tibet, the Congo, Cuba, and Laos. It carried interviews with Dulles, Bissell, and Sen. Eugene McCarthy. Dulles defended the Agency as a vital weapon in the Cold War, and Bissell noted that it only carried out missions that the White House assigned it. McCarthy complained that CIA had usurped Congress' warmaking power by toppling governments at the president's behest. The program showed much "local color" footage but apparently no material that the Agency provided. CIA observers concluded that the damage the show inflicted "lies not in security breaches but in the editorial slant and misrepresentations" made through "clever [film] splicing" and "artful editorializing."⁵⁵

McCone did not make any recorded comments about *The Science of Spying* or the effectiveness of CIA's approach toward it. [] of the CA Staff—one of the officers most involved in developing the Agency's media strategy—concluded, however, that "we probably devoted too much time and thought to the program." In the future, "[w]e need a subtle, patient, and carefully planned effort to see that we do get occasional positive treatment by TV and other media."⁵⁶ McCone's methods—reactive, defensive, and frequently hostile—were proving to be ill-suited for the emerging era of greater public accountability and journalistic scrutiny.

In addition to this carefully controlled media contact, McCone—partly at the White House's suggestion, partly on his own initiative—lifted his self-imposed embargo on outside appearances and met with selected individuals and sympathetic groups in controlled settings. In September 1964, the president asked McCone to travel to major US cities and

meet with business leaders, publishers, and other prominent private citizens to discuss CIA's views on world events and "disclose in a discreet manner [its] methods of operation, its competence, etc." Johnson believed "showing the flag" would offset unfavorable public comments about the Agency, particularly those emanating from Capitol Hill. The DCI "agreed to undertake this mission" and during the next several months met with journalists and corporate executives somewhat more often than before—to what effect is unclear.⁵⁷

Additionally, in late 1964, McCone attended two outside awards ceremonies and delivered remarks at each about international affairs and intelligence issues. He gave his first public speech as DCI on 14 November at the Catholic University of America, when he accepted the Cardinal Gibbons Medal for lifetime service to the Catholic Church. He used the occasion to defend CIA against some of the most common charges leveled against it, to recount some of its forecasting successes, and to describe the state of the communist world and the Soviet threat. After accepting the Herbert Hoover Medal from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers on 2 December, he made some general comments about world events. These appearances generated no unfavorable publicity and, in a small way, appear to have helped put a more benign face on the Agency, at least in some quarters.⁵⁸

Tightening the Pursestrings (U)

After President Johnson decreed an economy drive throughout the federal government in November 1963, McCone directed CIA managers to review their programs and budgets thoroughly and propose cutbacks within 90 days. He also wanted fitness reports for executives at the rank of chief of station (or the stateside equivalent) and above to include attention to economy as a job element. He

⁵⁵ Script for *The Science of Spying*, NBC News, 4 May 1965, and CIA memoranda, "Content Analysis of NBC Presentation *The Science of Spying*," 11 May 1965, and "Fact Sheet on NBC-TV's 'Science of Spying,'" 19 July 1965, OPA Files, Job 88-01365R, box 2, folder 24. The program's sole sponsor, B.F. Goodrich, cancelled its commercials shortly before airtime. The company claimed that the broadcast might "do harm to the government of the United States." The precipitous move evoked unfounded suspicion that CIA or the Johnson administration had pressured Goodrich into withdrawing its sponsorship. "A Hassle Over 'Spying' Documentary," *New York Herald Tribune*, 6 May 1965, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ [] memorandum, "NBC TV Show, 'The Science of Spying'...", OPA Files, Job 88-01365R, box 2, folder 5.

⁵⁷ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with the President—30 September [1964]," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9; McCone calendars, entries for November 1964–April 1965.

⁵⁸ McCone speech at the Catholic University of America, 14 November 1964, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 17; "McCone Awarded Hoover Medal," *New York Times*, 4 December 1964, McCone clipping file, HIC. In May 1964, McCone gave a brief talk about the Agency at a dinner of the Papal Knights of Malta, but the function was private, and his remarks went unreported. McCone speech files, McCone Papers, box 5, folder 17. For undisclosed reasons, McCone declined Helms's and Karamessines's recommendation that he meet with prominent American publishers at an off-the-record off-site to discuss the Agency's mission and activities and the intelligence and political threats it faced. Karamessines untitled memorandum to Helms, with attached routing sheet, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 1, folder 18.

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gave his top administrative lieutenants, Carter and Kirkpatrick, the primary responsibility for developing and carrying out the frugality measures, which were encouraged by hallway posters admonishing Agency employees to keep in mind that "The dollar you save may be your own!" The cutbacks included a hiring freeze; a curtailment in expansion of some programs in communications, photo interpretation, paramilitary operations, SIGINT collection, and research and development; and a reevaluation of personnel ceilings, overseas activities, and service and support functions. High-overhead areas such as aircraft and communications operations were to be managed more carefully. By DCI decree, the Agency had to use competitive fixed-price contracts wherever practical instead of sole-source or cost-plus-fee contracts. If the latter were necessary, incentives were written in for contractors to keep down costs.⁵⁹ ~~✗~~

McCone watched the economizing process carefully with his businessman's eye. Although he was pleased with the early results, he told Carter to "examine 'old Spanish customs' and eliminate [them] where possible," and urged his deputies that "no effort [should] be spared to expedite [the] attainment" of new budget and personnel ceilings. "[I]f any Directorate wanted to do something more than they were doing," he wrote, "they would have to absorb it within their own hide, and if they wanted to take on new responsibilities, they would have to give up something at the bottom priority level." He specifically expressed his dissatisfaction with the cost-effectiveness of the DDP, telling Kirkpatrick that, judging from what it produced, it was too big.⁶⁰ ~~✗~~

McCone and his deputies at CIA met the president's economy goals without impairing the Agency's ability to fulfill its core missions of intelligence collection, analysis, and warning. After six months, Kirkpatrick reported that a projected [] would be saved through numerous administrative belt-tightenings, especially reducing and real-

locating personnel, closing facilities, and streamlining production. []

When McCone left Langley, CIA was putting into action what would be known later by the catch-phrase "doing more with less."⁶¹ ~~✗~~

Improving Community Management (U)

To the end of his tenure as DCI, McCone strived to be a true director of the Intelligence Community, looking for better ways to carry out his responsibilities as its overseer and to improve coordination among its constituent departments. As of mid-1964, he was still dissatisfied with his ability to manage it. In his view, parochialism and shortsightedness persisted. He valued CIA's role as a counterweight to policy-driven diplomats and worst-case warfighters, and although he lauded individual community officials (such as the director of DIA, Gen. Joseph Carroll), he had little good to say about how the armed services ran their intelligence operations.

[B]ecause the military insist on a policy of rotation of personnel[,] you don't and you can't get the professionalism in the military intelligence organizations that you get here [at CIA]. And an added factor...is that traditionally within the military the intelligence is rather low in priority...the fellows out of the bottom third of the class go over there....

Military attachés, he claimed, were chosen "for being personalities rather than brains...and they usually like to get one that's got both a pretty and a rich wife.... As a result we've got a lot of attachés scattered around the world who

⁵⁹ President Johnson, "Memorandum for the Heads of Departments and Agencies," 30 November 1963, McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 4 December 1963, Carter memorandum to senior CIA managers, "President's Memorandum on Government Economy," Action Memorandum A-319, 6 December 1963, McCone letter to Kermit Gordon (Director, Bureau of the Budget), 13 December 1963, Kirkpatrick memorandum on "Economy Poster," Action Memorandum A-337, 23 December 1963, and Carter untitled memorandum to Kirkpatrick, 24 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 7; DCI morning meeting minutes for 3 December 1963, *ibid.*, Job 80R01580R, box 17, folder 345; McCone memorandum to Carter, "Agency Procurement Activities in Fiscal Year 1964," 15 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5. Johnson's government cost-cutting was part of his deficit reduction plan, which in turn was a tactic to help get a tax cut bill through Congress. ~~✗~~

⁶⁰ McCone memorandum to senior Agency managers, "Economy Measures," Action Memorandum A-411, 18 August 1964, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 7; McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 4 December 1963, ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 7; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 6, entry for 4 August 1964. ~~✗~~

⁶¹ Kirkpatrick memorandum to McCone, "Report on Economy Measures Within CIA for the Period Ending 31 March 1964," 6 May 1964 (with McCone's handwritten comments), ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 7, folder 7; Bross memorandum to McCone, "Funding of Intelligence Community Programs," 4 February 1965, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 129; "Total CIA Obligations, 1947-1977," ER Files, Job 79M01476A, box 1, folder 12; "Full-Time Permanent Personnel, 1950-1977," *ibid.*, Job 79M00467A, box 2, folder 24. ~~✗~~

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are the best damn dancers in the military, but...."⁶² ~~XX~~

McCone considered two answers to the problem of community disunity. One was to create an assistant secretary of defense for intelligence who would superintend the collection and analysis activities of all military intelligence entities. McCone believed that establishing this office would alleviate many of the bureaucratic conflicts between the DCI and the Pentagon and permit better management of tactical intelligence. The other idea was to give the secretary of defense operational responsibility for the military elements in the community—~~XX~~



The US Intelligence Board in April 1965 (U)

~~XX~~ while making the DCI the "executive agent" of all national intelligence resources—CIA, NSA, NRO, NPIC, and FMSAC. McCone saw some virtue in severing the DCI's "intimate relationship" with CIA so that he could more effectively guide the entire community, but he recognized that the director's dependence on the Agency for staff support and nondepartmental analysis made that arrangement unworkable. He compared the British and West German intelligence bureaucracies and concluded that the latter offered a much better model for the United States. In Britain, the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee was separated from operations, which severely limited his value to the prime minister ~~XX~~

~~XX~~ The ~~XX~~ chief was more of a DCI than McCone.⁶³ ~~XX~~

CIA and DIA worked well together by 1965, so McCone did not give their relations much attention during his last months at Langley. He had received evaluations of DIA's performance from Agency officers who chaired the principal USIB committees and from the heads of the directorates.

⁶² Transcript of McCone meeting with Sir Kenneth Strong, 4 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 9. ~~XX~~

⁶³ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. Clark Clifford...14 July 1964," *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 463–64; McCone memorandum concerning meeting with CIA and Bureau of the Budget, 9 October 1964, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 12; transcript of McCone meeting with Fubini, 16 November 1964, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 1. ~~XX~~

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McCone continued meeting weekly with USIB, which was as busy during Johnson's administration as it was during Kennedy's. Vietnam, Laos, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East were the main topics of national estimates and special assessments. As discussed in earlier chapters, the board's committee structure and responsibilities were changed and new procedures for handling compartmented information and defectors were instituted under McCone's chairmanship. The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance submitted the most reports of any committee—representing one half of the board's output—a reflection of the surging growth of technical means in the national intelligence effort. Among his final significant actions as head of the community, McCone issued several new DCI Directives: a charter for the Critical Collection Problems Committee, an important vehicle for integrating all-source collection on "hard target" countries and problems; terms of reference for the USIB Watch Committee and National Indications Center, charged with warning of imminent Sino-Soviet Bloc hostilities; and procedures for rationalizing production of nuclear, guided missile, space, and economic intelligence.⁶⁵

In the area of technical security, McCone found an arrangement ripe for the sort of consolidation he had effected elsewhere, but serious information compromises had to be uncovered before the situation was improved. In 1956, the NSC had set up a Special Committee on Technical Surveillance Countermeasures—a delayed reaction to the discovery in 1952 of a sophisticated listening device concealed in the Great Seal of the United States hanging in

the American ambassador's office in the embassy in Moscow. The committee had achieved some measure of interdepartmental coordination, but as an NSC entity, it was too awkwardly positioned between USIB and community components to set policy effectively. The NSC abolished the committee in late 1964—ironically, after discoveries of Soviet audio penetrations of the US embassies in Moscow and Warsaw indicated that the current system needed fixing urgently.⁶⁶ In its stead, McCone, with the assistance of USIB, was charged with responsibility for coordinating technical surveillance countermeasures, and a new committee was set up for that purpose. Placed inside the now-efficiently running machinery of USIB that McCone helped develop, the Technical Surveillance Countermeasures Committee was able to translate national requirements into action—precisely what had been missing in the previous countermeasures program. Within CIA, McCone told DDS&T Wheelon to mount a major counter-audio research and development program.⁶⁷

McCone took an especially keen interest in the preparation of the last annual reports on the community and CIA that were written for PFIAB during his tenure. After closely reviewing early versions, McCone had the community report revised and the "sterile, uninspiring" Agency summary redone from scratch. He wanted the reports to

reflect the activities of the community and of CIA accurately and comprehensively and to bring out to the fullest extent the positive accomplishments of the

⁶⁵ Lay, vol. 5, 14–15, 20–23, 25; Bross memorandum to McCone, "Actions Taken to Improve Effectiveness of Intelligence Effort of the Government as a Whole," 15 April 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 122; DCID No. 2/2 (New Series), "Charter for Critical Collection Problems Committee (CCPC)," DCID No. 1/5 (New Series), "Terms of Reference, Watch Committee of the USIB," DCID No. 3/3 (New Series), "Production of Atomic Energy Intelligence," DCID No. 3/4 (New Series), "Production of Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence," DCID No. 3/1 (New Series), "Production and Coordination of Foreign Economic Intelligence," all effective 23 April 1965, DCI Files, Job 86T00268, box 2, folder 12.

⁶⁶ The Department of State had difficulty connecting specific Soviet foreign policy decisions to the compromised intelligence and concluded that Moscow had not used most of it. Because embassy security was the responsibility of the Department of State, McCone and CIA avoided criticism. Moscow Embassy EMBTEL 3311, 29 April 1964, Department of State DEPTELs 3499 and 3577, 19 and 24 May 1964, Robert Bannerman (Director, CIA Office of Security) memorandum to USIB Security Committee, "Preliminary Damage Assessment of the Technical Surveillance Penetration of the US Embassy, Moscow," 1 June 1964, and Department of State, "Estimate of Damage to US Foreign Policy Interests (From Net of Listening Devices in US Embassy Moscow)," 2 October 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XIV, The Soviet Union*, docs. 30–32, 35, 47; Bannerman memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board on 4 June 1964," DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 12; Max Frankel, "In Moscow, Walls Have Ears (40)," *New York Times*, 20 May 1964, Nosenko clipping file, HIC; Bannerman memorandum to Kirkpatrick, "Briefing of Baker Panel, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 11 May 1964, and CIA memorandum, "Replies to Inquiries of Special Panel on Audio Countermeasures, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 14 May 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 124; PFIAB, "Minutes of Board Meeting of June 4, 1964," 3–7, 13, PFIAB record no. 206-10001-10013, PFIAB Records, NARA.

⁶⁷ "Security Program of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1941–68. Volume I," 205; idem, "Security Program of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1941–68. Volume II," pt. 2, 261–65; idem, "Security Program of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1941–68. Volume VI: Technical Security," Support Services Historical Series No. OS-6 (May 1972), 78–80, 118–20, 123–24; NSAM No. 317, "Audiosurveillance and Countermeasures Problems Within the Intelligence Community," 15 November 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 10; DCID No. 1/12 (New Series), "Technical Surveillance Countermeasures Committee," 23 December 1964, DCI Files, Job 86T00268, box 2, folder 12; Lay, vol. 5, 72–75; Wheelon memorandum to McCone, "First Progress Report on Counter Audio Research and Development," 24 June 1964, CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 124.

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community and the agency. Also[,] I wish the [A]gency report to reflect the competence, the experience, the intellectual background of the organization, the care with which security matters are handled, particularly personnel security, and the skill and professionalism involved in operational undertakings. Also[,] I wish the report to deal in depth with the importance, the value, and the contribution to US policy which emanates from our current intelligence reports and our BNE estimates.... Finally, I want to "call the glass of water half full instead of half empty" at all times.

The CIA report, McCone said, in particular should detail the Agency's achievements in science and technology issues, stressing its responsiveness to PFIAB recommendations and its successes in connecting technical collection to analysis. It should discuss successful recruitments of agents in place as well as productive handling of defectors—by way of underscoring the DDP's "active" espionage efforts and downplay-

ing slightly the prominence of "passive" collection through walk-ins. Finally, the report should indicate the influence of estimates on policy and the rationalized procedures by which they were requested and produced.⁶⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone's attitude toward these reviews suggests that he regarded them almost as valedictory statements on his directorship, and his final opportunity to educate US officials on the Agency's accomplishments and indispensability. Within the confines of their format—responses to specific questions from PFIAB—they favorably evaluated the community's accomplishments during his tenure.⁶⁹ They do more than recite achievements and state challenges. They are testimonials—albeit in bland bureaucratese—to McCone's sense of leadership, implicitly giving his prescription for what a DCI should be and do. Reading them leaves little sense that at the time they were being prepared, the Vietnam conflict was causing McCone to despair of his relations with the White House and that his time at Langley was nearing its end. ~~XX~~

⁶⁸ McCone undated memorandum to Carter, "Annual Reports on DCI Community Activities and the Central Intelligence Agency for the PFIAB due October 1," McCone Papers, box 9, folder 5; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 6, entry for 14 September 1964. ~~XX~~

⁶⁹ *Annual Report for FY 1965*. For a précis in a similar vein by McCone, in response to a presidential request to heads of all departments and agencies, see McCone letter to the president, 3 December 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 475–78. ~~XX~~

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The Saga in Southeast Asia Continues (U)

During his final nine months as DCI, John McCone tried, with no more success than anyone else in the Johnson administration, to solve the United States' Vietnam conundrum: how to fulfill security commitments to an anticommunist ally that seemed unable or unwilling to bear its share of the burden, without undertaking a costly, open-ended military involvement that risked either confrontation with the major communist powers or a humiliating stalemate, defeat, or withdrawal. As DCI and a member of the NSC, McCone contributed to the formulation of US policy in Vietnam and to CIA's role in carrying it out. Though regarded as a "hawk" on military issues, his views actually fell well within the mainstream of administration thinking until he was near the end of his tenure, when he advocated a full-bore aerial assault on North Vietnam. By then he was outside the White House inner circle, and his influence on Vietnam matters was insignificant throughout the closing period of his directorship. (U)

Meanwhile, the clandestine war against North Vietnamese encroachments into Laotian territory, which had expanded so substantially during McCone's time as DCI, was fully subordinated to the larger struggle between Hanoi and Saigon. President Johnson stepped up US paramilitary activities in Laos to interdict North Vietnamese infiltration into and operations against South Vietnam. The purpose of supporting the Hmong and other tribal forces in Laos changed. It was no longer an effort to uphold the Geneva agreements and secure Laotian neutrality but had become an operation to harass the North Vietnamese. Developments in Vietnam would determine the success or failure of the covert actions CIA and US Army Special Forces conducted with America's Laotian tribal proxies. (U)

The Laotian Sideshow (U)

The transformation of the CIA-originated clandestine counterinsurgency in Laos into a conventional military

operation moved ahead during 1964.¹ The United States kept resupplying the royalist and neutralist armies, and the Hmong force grew steadily in size to 17,000 (with expansion to 23,000 authorized). The Pathet Lao launched successful campaigns in central Laos and on the Plain of Jars in early and mid-1964. The Hmong again saw action in a tactical role during the summer offensive and for the first time received support from US combat aircraft. (CIA-recruited American civilians, directed by Agency case officers, flew some of the missions; [redacted])

[redacted] American use of other tribal fighters in the central and southern regions of the country increased. The NSC's Special Group, on which McCone sat, in June 1964 approved a plan, submitted by the JCS, [redacted]

[redacted] In addition, other CIA and Special Forces operations continued, including cross-border reconnaissance missions launched from South Vietnam into Laos along the "Ho Chi Minh" Trail (codenamed [redacted]), and development of safe areas and staybehind nets. The Agency resisted the Army's attempts to increase the size of the roadwatcher units and to use them in tactical operations. CIA insisted on, and retained, full control of the activities of Laotian irregulars. [redacted]

Around the same time, the governing tripartite coalition, led by the neutralist Souvanna Phouma, fell apart in spite of US support after a military putsch in April 1964 failed and the communists withdrew from the government.³ In August, CIA judged that the situation in Laos "is so fragile that it could crumble in any of many ways," such as a Pathet Lao counteroffensive or a rightist coup. Souvanna Phouma—regarded as almost everyone's second choice to

¹ Overview information for this section comes from Ahern, *Undercover Armies*, chaps. 9–10; *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 1–363. ~~SECRET~~

² "Covert Action Briefing Data: Laos—Summary of Counterinsurgency Program: Authorizations," June 1965; CIA memorandum, "Status of Lao Paramilitary Programs," 7 August 1964, and Colby memorandum, "National Security Council Meeting—29 April 1964," EA Division Files, Job 78-01412R, box 2, folder 3; [redacted] 7 May 1964, *ibid.*, folder 2; [redacted] memorandum, "Briefing of Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll on [redacted] Operation in Central Laos," 16 April 1964, *ibid.*, folder 1; CIA memorandum, "CAS Paramilitary Assets in Laos," 14 August 1964, *ibid.*, Job 78-01389R, box 1, folder 9. ~~SECRET~~

³ For an Agency assessment of the coup attempt, see OCI Memorandum, "Background of the 19 April Rightist Coup in Laos," OCI No. 1124/64, 22 April 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 59–61. McCone was displeased that CIA had not forecast the putsch more precisely. Minutes of DCI morning meeting on 20 April 1964, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 127, folder 347. ~~SECRET~~

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run the country—eventually reestablished some measure of control, and in early 1965 Gen. Phoumi Nousavan—at one time the Agency's favored leader—fled to Thailand. The battlefield situation became much more active in early 1964 and then stabilized, falling into a seasonal rhythm of engagement and withdrawal—the “seesaw war,” one writer has called it—that persisted for most of the decade. The struggle pitted 50,000 Laotian regulars and over 23,000 CIA-backed guerrillas (Hmong, Yao, and Kha) against perhaps 20,000 Pathet Lao fighters and about 11,000 North Vietnamese soldiers.⁴ In December 1964, the US Air Force began bombing communist strongholds in Laos (Operation BARREL ROLL)—which was in addition to missions already being flown by the Lao air force and the US Air Force and Navy—and a few weeks later the Ho Chi Minh Trail also was targeted. The bombing raised the spirits of the Laotian tribal fighters but had little tactical or strategic effect. In early 1965, North Vietnam reinforced its troops in northern Laos and along the Trail in preparation for its next dry-season offensive.⁵

As the US military presence in Vietnam slowly expanded during 1964, McCone worried that the Johnson administration might be drifting into a commitment to send ground troops into Laos to disrupt Hanoi's campaign against South Vietnam. Speaking as a policy adviser with insights into Republican Party thinking, he told McGeorge Bundy in June 1964 that deployment of US forces in Laos “would cause consternation throughout the country...not one person in 50 favored such [a] commitment.” Even “hardboiled spokesmen” of strong action against the North Vietnamese, such as Sen. Barry Goldwater and former Vice President Richard Nixon, wanted the American presence in Laos lim-

ited to airstrike personnel and materiel. In the DCI's judgment, congressional reaction to sending ground troops to Laos would be “infinitely more violent” than the debate over a congressional joint resolution supporting the current Vietnam policy.⁶

At the same time, McCone urged the administration not to make any concessions to the Pathet Lao, battlefield conditions notwithstanding, and to insist that the Laotian communists abide by all the terms of the 1962 Geneva accords. The United States had to resist North Vietnam's “salami” tactics against both Laos and South Vietnam, tactics that were part of its “‘plausibly deniable’ scheme” to “weaken the will to resist among the anti-Communists in Southeast Asia so that the whole fabric will collapse, leaving the United States nothing to fight with or for.” The Johnson administration must adhere to a consistent, forward-looking policy, especially because international pressure probably would force it to attend another conference in Geneva, where it would be placed at a diplomatic disadvantage. (Informally to Robert McNamara, McCone said the United States should “move to Geneva from a real position of strength with the US fleet pointing at Haiphong. The Secretary of Defense agreed.”) Otherwise, the DCI told the president, “there was a grave danger of us ‘sliding down the slippery slope’ on day-to-day decisions and that we did not have a full scenario of actions in view of the military effort that was now being made.”⁷

The reflex to retaliate when the Pathet Lao shot down a US reconnaissance aircraft early in June 1964 exemplified McCone's point. McNamara thought that the administration must stop “talking tough and acting weak,” but Marshall

⁴ In a cable from Vientiane in mid-May 1964, Ambassador Leonard Unger expressed the sense of frustrated resignation that most US officials in Laos felt at the time:

[O]ur sorry position remains what it always has been.... PL [Pathet Lao] backed by Viet Minh can launch successful push at time and place of their choosing[,] with friendly forces' capability of successfully resisting limited. If we have to live with the situation, and we do unless we want to risk Souvanna's quitting or his and our being caught in violations of the Geneva accords, best we can do is to work thru Meo, Yao, etc., to take advantage of PL extending their lines of communication and harass their rear, hopefully causing them to pull back or at least to halt any drive that they may have in mind with the objective of reaching to or almost to Mekong...

Embassy Vientiane to Department of State, [redacted] 13 May 1964, DDO Files, Job 78-01389R, box 1, folder 8.

⁵ Joseph Scott (Department of State) memorandum to the Special Group, “Report of the Subcommittee on United States Support of Foreign Paramilitary Forces,” 17 January 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 3; CIA analysis prepared for Chester Cooper (NSC), August 1964, “Editorial Note,” *ibid.*, 251; JCS memorandum to McNamara, “Operations in Laos,” JCSM-1050-64, 17 December 1964, *ibid.*, 307-9; Colby memorandum, “Meeting of Principals on Vietnam—19 December [1964],” *ibid.*, 309; Embassy Saigon cable to Department of State, EMBTEL 2073, 7 January 1965, *ibid.*, 313-15; Cooper memorandum to President Johnson, “Developments with Respect to Laos,” 22 January 1965, *ibid.*, 318; INR memorandum to Rusk, “Communist Buildup in Southern Laos May Be Precautionary,” 27 January 1965, *ibid.*, 323-24; SNIE 10-65, “Communist Military Capabilities and Near-Term Intentions in Laos and South Vietnam,” 4 February 1965, *ibid.*, 332; NSAM No. 328, 6 April 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 539; CIA memorandum, “Status of Lao Paramilitary Programs,” 7 August 1964, EA Division Files, Job 78-01412R, box 2, folder 3.

⁶ McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Executive Committee with the President...,” 6 June 1964, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 9.

⁷ Colby, “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on Laos—18 May 1964,” DDO Files, Job 78-03041R, box 3, folder 11; McCone, “Memorandum for the Record...National Security Council Meeting—19 April 1964,” *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos*, 46; “Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on...June 7th, [1964], with the President...,” *ibid.*, 149-50; “Summary Record of [NSC] Meeting,” 10 June 1964, *ibid.*, 174.

Carter (speaking for the DCI) objected that a reprisal would be "out of sequence" and serve no longer range plan to improve the American position in Laos. Instead, McCone agreed only that the aerial reconnaissance missions should have fighter escorts authorized to return fire if attacked. The president, however, approved an airstrike against a Pathet Lao artillery site.⁸ (U)

After late November 1964, CIA's covert war came under tighter control with the arrival of a new ambassador to Laos, William H. Sullivan. Sullivan had been W. Averell Harriman's principal deputy during the negotiations in Geneva. "[C]onsidered brilliant by most and tyrannical by many," according to a recent history of the Laotian conflict, Sullivan had instructions to scrutinize all clandestine activities in country. The confrontation soon became known as "Mr. Sullivan's War." The popular image of the omniscient, omnipotent ambassador—as conveyed in Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy's remark that "[t]here wasn't a bag of rice dropped in Laos that he didn't know about"—is overdrawn, as Sullivan had no command authority over US military resources needed to support the Laotian irregulars. However, the ambassador carefully managed the American role in the covert war to maintain the appearance that the United States was adhering to the 1962 agreements. He resisted MACV's attempts to launch operations from South Vietnam using the local fighters it had taken over from CIA under [redacted] he did not want MACV's Studies and Observations Group using Laos as a staging point for infiltrations into North Vietnam; and he did not permit the Agency to recruit guerrillas from the Hmong living in the North. His expectations for operations against the Ho Chi Minh Trail were modest: "[a] little intelligence scouting, with luck a little sabotage, [redacted]"

[redacted] Sullivan believed that CIA operations in the Panhandle had the best chance to succeed of any US-supported ground activity in Laos. In other regards, the Agency often found itself in a secondary role, brokering

relations between Washington, the embassy, MACV, and the Agency's tribal proxies to ensure that the latter got what they needed to fight the communists.⁹ (U)

With Sullivan now overseeing covert operations, and with Laotian affairs subsumed under the Vietnam conflict, McCone largely withdrew from the issue for the rest of his directorship. Any complaints he had about the conventionalizing and bureaucratizing of the clandestine war in Laos, and CIA's loss of operational independence there, do not appear in the record. The DCI probably realized that after [redacted] a similar Pentagon takeover of paramilitary operations in Laos was inevitable, and by this late date he was tired of fighting the military bureaucracy. Speaking privately to Secretary of State Rusk, however, McCone questioned whether the US government was properly organized to conduct counterinsurgency. Too many departments were involved, some were not discharging their responsibilities properly, and the diminution of the Special Group Counterinsurgency's role was hampering White House management of the disparate programs whose objective was to combat communist-supported insurgencies.¹⁰ ~~XX~~

[redacted] Soon after McCone resigned, BNE assessed that the communists were unlikely to stir up the military situation in Laos. Since the Geneva agreements, they had achieved their main objective there: gaining control of the border regions for use in infiltrating men and material into South Vietnam.¹¹ ~~XX~~

"That Bitch of a War" (U)

Political and military conditions in South Vietnam worsened during the late summer and early fall of 1964, but the administration put off hard choices about the war until after the November election.¹² McCone and CIA analysts grew more worried that instability and Viet Cong successes in the

⁸ "Summary Record of the 533rd Meeting of the National Security Council," 6 June 1964, McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the Executive Committee with the President...," 6 June 1964, and Bromley Smith (NSC), "Memorandum of Conference with President Johnson," 8 June 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos, 141-44, 152-60. (U)

⁹ [redacted] *Undercover Armies*, 280-82; Conboy and Andradé, 140-41; Embassy Vientiane cable to Department of State, EMBTEL 1726, 23 April 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos, 361. Sullivan reflected on his ambassadorial service in his memoir, *Obbligato: 1939-1979*, 208-27. The Johnson administration regarded Sullivan's abilities highly. McGeorge Bundy credited the "resourceful" ambassador with blocking "an unusually foolish coup" in late January 1965 "by getting a tipsy Australian technician to cut some [radio] wires" and preventing the plotters from communicating with their comrades. Bundy memorandum to the president, "News of the Day," with attachments, 31 January 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos, 325-28. (U)

¹⁰ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...18 Mar 65," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16. ~~XX~~

¹¹ SNIE 58-65, "Short-Term Prospects for Laos," 5 August 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXVIII, Laos, 380-84; Colby memorandum to DCI William Raborn, "Request for Release from Reserve for Contingencies to Fund CIA Operations in Laos in Fiscal Year 1965," 1 June 1965, DDO Files, Job 78-02805R, box 1, folder 22. ~~XX~~

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South might prompt the Saigon government to negotiate with Hanoi. In September, he told the NSC and congressional leaders of the rising influence of southern "neutralist" factions that favored talks, and of signs of increasing anti-American sentiment in South Vietnam. Taking issue with Rusk's conjecture that the communists' restraint after the Tonkin Gulf raid suggested their wariness and flexibility, McCone contended that Hanoi and the Viet Cong believed the war was going well and that their guarded reaction was tactical; intelligence reports indicated that they were temporarily shifting to political efforts to exploit divisions between southern Catholics and Buddhists. Further concessions by the regime to the Buddhists would further alienate the Catholics. "The schism between the rival interests is deepening and could easily precipitate a civil war unless the United States is able to exercise a moderating influence and persuade the differing parties...to patch up their differences for the duration." McCone held out little hope for that, however. Like McNamara, he believed that "we can squeeze through between now [late September] and the next several weeks...[but] after the election, we've got a real problem on our hands." The situation was worse than under Diem, McCone believed, and if Gen. Nguyen Khanh used force to suppress opposition, as the DCI thought some officials in Washington would encourage him to, then the South Vietnamese leader would be through. Sen. Richard Russell, the Agency's staunchest ally in Congress, informed the president in early November that "I told John McCone he ought to get somebody to run that country [who] didn't want us in there.... Then...we could get out with good grace. But he didn't take me very seriously."¹³

As the United States' chief intelligence officer, McCone was especially distressed at inadequacies in collection on Viet Cong operations—especially the failures of the South Vietnamese civilian and military services to detect preparations for terrorist attacks.

What concerns me is [the] lack of detailed current intelligence on VC locations, activities, and operations which make possible recurrent and discouraging ambushes. I am at a loss to understand how VC forces can assemble in battalion size or greater in geographic areas or in the vicinity of communities which are presumably held by government elements without some advance knowledge of the presence of VC being communicated to the authorities. I am at a loss to understand how a battalion size attack could occur four miles from the Saigon airport without a civilian informant communicating a warning. In sum, where are the Vietnamese Paul Reveres? Obtaining info of this type seems to me to be the responsibility of the Vietnamese civilian and military [services] and I raised the question as to whether they are properly organized, trained, and motivated, and whether the friendly population is in support. I do not believe that [redacted] or MACV can do this, but we must see that it is done and done efficiently by the Vietnamese.

McCone attributed the collection gap to "fear, apathy and discontent among the population," and noted that intelligence operations in South Vietnam in general suffered from the same disarray that beset military and political activities.

[redacted] The United States soon paid the price of this collection failure. On 1 November, two days before the election, the Viet Cong attacked the American airbase at Bien Hoa, killing five Americans, wounding 76, and destroying 27 of 30 aircraft. This was the first time the guerrillas had targeted a US installation. No warning had been received, even though Viet Cong fighters had infiltrated the surrounding area in recent weeks. The administration decided not to retaliate immediately; "we are inevitably affected by [the] election timing," Dean Rusk wrote.¹⁴

¹² The section heading is taken from Johnson's comments to historian Doris Kearns about the political dilemma he found himself in over Vietnam:

I knew from the start that I was bound to be crucified either way I moved. If I left the woman I really loved—the Great Society—in order to get involved with that bitch of a war on the other side of the world, then I would lose everything at home. All my programs...[a]ll my dreams.... But if I left that war and let the Communists take over South Vietnam...there would follow in this country an endless national debate—a mean and destructive debate—that would shatter my presidency, kill my administration, and damage our democracy.

Quoted in Doris Kearns, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, 251. For secondary materials regarding Vietnam during the latter months of McCone's directorship, see the Appendix on Sources. (U)

¹³ McCone memoranda of meetings with the NSC and the congressional leadership on 9 September 1964 and with the president and his national security advisers on 14 September 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 9; *Reaching for Glory*, 41, 137.

¹⁴ "Notes for DDCI, 14 September 1964," ER Files, Job 80B01676R, box 13, folder 10; "Excerpts from Memorandum for the Record of 5 October 1964...Discussions by DCI with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board...2 October 1964," CMS Files, Job 92B01039R, box 7, folder 131; documents on the Bien Hoa attack in *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 873-82.

~~SECRET~~*The Saga in Southeast Asia Continues (U)*

Another collection lapse, this time involving North Vietnamese infiltration into the South, became evident soon after the Tonkin Gulf incidents. President Johnson asked McCone why North Vietnam had not reacted strongly to US retaliatory airstrikes. McCone said Hanoi was waiting and watching and probably calculated that the political unrest in the South benefited it for the time being. Actually, unbeknownst to CIA, the US military, or the South Vietnamese, North Vietnam had been preparing to deploy troops to the South for several months. In September, the first full combat units of the North Vietnamese army began to move down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. CIA did not report the movements until December.¹⁵ (U)

During late 1964 and early 1965, McCone was involved in a dispute over collection of statistics on enemy infiltration that foreshadowed the controversy analyst Samuel Adams was to have a few years later with DCI Richard Helms. MACV recently had submitted new figures showing that Viet Cong and North Vietnamese infiltration into the South was up 250 percent. USIB sent a team to Saigon in mid-November to evaluate the numbers, which information then available in Washington could not corroborate. The team confirmed the much higher figures. McNamara and Rusk "expressed great dissatisfaction" with the revision. They thought critics of the administration's policy in Vietnam would charge that the new numbers were contrived to justify military action. McCone ordered the USIB contingent to stay in Saigon until further notice and directed Agency officers to thoroughly review all CIA reporting and estimates about infiltration, with special attention to how [redacted] affected collection and what influence the Pentagon and the secretary of defense had had on estimates. McCone wrote that "I am sure [this subject] will assume very major proportions over the next few weeks, and therefore I want a thorough and careful research job done." New assessments of Viet Cong strength by CIA, DIA, and the Department of State in early 1965 substantiated the upward trend; the revised figure of 50,000 to 100,000 was 50 percent higher than previous MACV estimates. McCone attributed the increase to MACV's customary underestimation of the enemy and to bureaucratic delays in reporting information on new communist units. A surprised McNamara replied that if the higher figures were true, "we were 'simply

outmanned.'" At that point, the discrepancy was subordinated to assessment of the impact of the ROLLING THUNDER bombing program on enemy manpower movements, and McCone did not deal with the matter again.¹⁶ ~~SECRET~~

Throughout the latter part of 1964, CIA analysts produced a succession of downcast assessments that McCone approved and used in briefings and discussions with policymakers. He did not try, as he had in 1963, to modify their tone or prognoses. Not only did he agree with their judgments, but he apparently believed that, now more than ever, the administration needed to hear the dismal truth. In September, CIA estimators concluded that "the signs of deterioration are so many and so clear...that the odds now favor a continuing decay of South Vietnam will and effectiveness in coming weeks, sufficient to imperil the political base for present US policy and objectives in South Vietnam." In October, ONE described continued political and military deterioration and saw few prospects for improvement. Agency officers William Colby and George Carver independently weighed in with similar conclusions. A Saigon station assessment in December 1964, drafted by George Allen, detailed intensifying enemy activity, declining ARVN effectiveness, eroding government influence in the countryside, and persistent disunity and instability in the leadership in Saigon. Allen's report was not coordinated with other members of the US mission, so in early 1965 the administration asked for a composite view. In February, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor approved a joint CIA-MACV estimate only after deleting discouraging forecasts from the outgoing cable. The station sent the original, bleaker analysis to Headquarters, where analysts used it when working on later assessments. After intelligence reporting in early 1965 indicated that Hanoi had dispatched entire combat units (up to division size) to South Vietnam, the above scenario repeated itself. In the spring, the mission drafted a gloomy assessment; the ambassador deleted the worst news from the outgoing cable; and the station sent the full text to Langley for analysts' use.¹⁷ ~~SECRET~~

CIA's in-house assessments of Vietnam between mid-1964 and mid-1965 mostly were on economic subjects and came from the DI's Office of Research and Reports. ORR

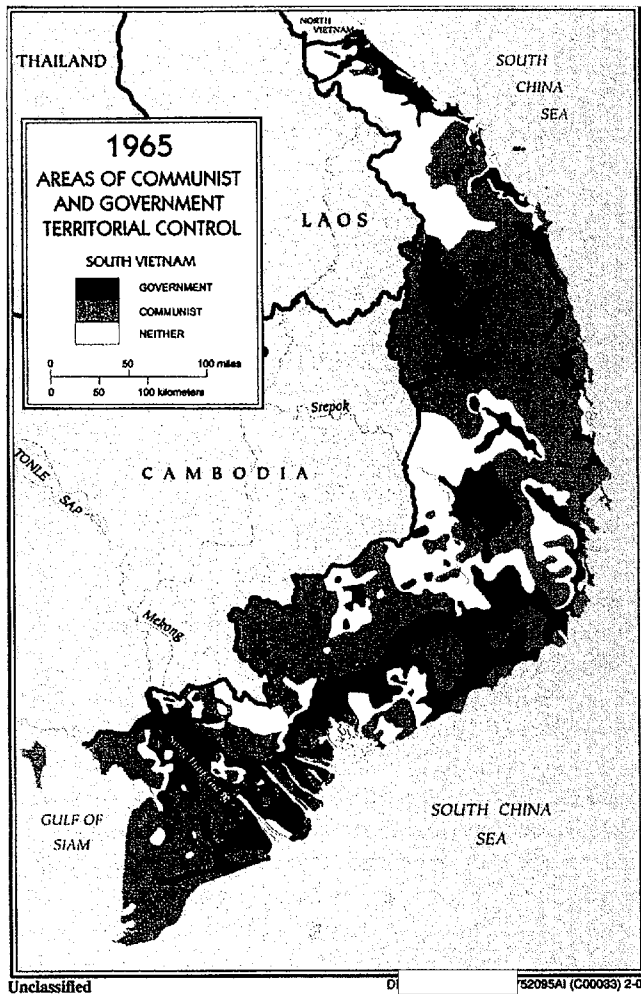
¹⁵ Bundy, "Memorandum of a Meeting, White House...September 9, 1964...", *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 754; Moise, 251. (U)

¹⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara on 16 November 1964," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting on 11/24/64—Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Ball, McGeorge Bundy, General Wheeler, McCone, and William Bundy," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 14; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara—18 March 1965," *ibid.*, folder 16; [redacted] 231. ~~SECRET~~

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yses accumulated, McCone and CIA were unalterably cast in the role of bearers of bad news—news that further estranged him and the Agency from the administration, while reinforcing its disposition to pursue victory in Vietnam.¹⁸ ~~X~~

What To Do Next (U)

Administration officials agreed with CIA that conditions in South Vietnam had gotten much worse but decided that the United States must find a way to prevent a large scale political and military collapse there. With a landslide election win behind him, and with his frustration over the war mounting, President Johnson was willing to entertain more venturesome options to buttress the Saigon government. Policy discussions during late 1964, to which McCone and other senior Agency officers contributed, focused on tactics—what to do—rather than strategic issues—was Vietnam vital to US interests; could the United States achieve its objectives there; would the region fall to the communists without American intervention? The most important venue for deliberation in this period was an NSC working group headed by Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy and including members from the Departments of State and Defense, the JCS, the NSC, and CIA (Harold Ford from ONE). The president convened the group in early November to prepare a comprehensive new assessment for the principals to discuss. During the next few weeks, it established the policy framework that the administration followed for most of the balance of McCone's tenure.¹⁹ (U)

analyzed scenarios of economic interdiction against the North (concluding, for example, that a naval blockade probably would not work); examined the logistical infrastructure of North Vietnam and the mechanics of its infiltration of men and materiel into the South; and studied the economy of Viet Cong-controlled areas of the South (judging that the enemy obtained most of its supplies locally). In more direct support of military operations, ORR worked with targeting intelligence and conducted damage assessments after ROLLING THUNDER began in March 1965. As the anal-

The Bundy Working Group reached a consensus that the United States must undertake a gradually escalating program of military actions, including airstrikes against the North, as a way to coerce Hanoi into negotiating. That approach, referred to as Option C in the group's report to the president, was deemed preferable either to continuing current military efforts (including reprisals against "terrorist" attacks) while seeking a diplomatic settlement on any acceptable terms ("Option A"), or quickly starting a "sys-

¹⁷ SNIE 53-64, "Chances for a Stable Government in South Vietnam," 8 September 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 742-46; CIA memorandum, "Deterioration in South Vietnam," 28 September 1964, attachment to Carter letter to Bundy, same date, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 342, recast as SNIE 53-2-64, "The Situation in South Vietnam," 1 October 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 806-11 (the quoted language was not in the published estimate); Bruce Palmer Jr., "US Intelligence and Vietnam," *Studies* 28, no. 5 (1984): 34-35; Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 65-66, 73-74; Allen, *None so Blind*, 185-88, 193-94. ~~X~~

¹⁸ McGeorge Bundy told President Johnson that he thought some of the Agency's analysis "was a shade blue, not quite a balanced account." He attributed that quality to "a little bit [of] covering their flanks...making sure that they are the ones that are giving the gloomy news first." *Reaching for Glory*, 42. (U)

¹⁹ The Bundy Working Group is discussed in David Kaiser, *American Tragedy*, 355-59, 362-70; Van de Mark, 26-29, 31-35; Bird, *The Color of Truth*, 293-95; and "Editorial Note," *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 886-88. (U)

~~SECRET~~*The Saga in Southeast Asia Continues (U)*

tematic program of military pressures" against a full range of North Vietnamese targets ("Option B," also called "a hard/fast squeeze"). The latter was considered too risky, raising the likelihood of Chinese intervention. US officials offered several reasons for stepping up American military activity: to boost South Vietnamese morale, to give the Saigon government a "breathing spell" from communist attacks, to interdict infiltration of Northern supplies and manpower, to compel Hanoi to stop supporting the Viet Cong and begin talking (McCone's rationale), or just to "do something" so the United States would not "lose" Vietnam—especially after China exploded its first nuclear device in October and raised its power profile in the Asian region. Option C, according to Bundy's group, had the advantage of flexibility:

The whole sequence of military actions would be designed to give the impression of a steady, deliberate approach, and to give the US the option at any time (subject to enemy reaction) to proceed or not, to escalate or not, and to quicken the pace or not. Concurrently, the US would be alert to any sign of yielding by Hanoi, and would be prepared to explore negotiated solutions that attain US solutions in an acceptable manner.²⁰ (U)

The Bundy Working Group circulated drafts of its prescription among senior administration officials. After McCone received his copy, he asked several high-level subordinates review it. DDI Cline, FE Division chief Colby, Abbot Smith of ONE, and R. Jack Smith, head of OCI, judged that the North Vietnamese most likely would not relent under gradual escalation and that the administration should not count on the Saigon government becoming strong enough to resist the communist insurgency.²¹ ~~✗~~

In its final form, as approved by the president on 7 December, Option C would be implemented in two phases. Starting in early December, covert operations and aerial reconnaissance flights north of the DMZ would be intensified, and communist infiltration routes inside Laos

would be bombed (BARREL ROLL). After 1 January, an escalating series of aerial attacks against North Vietnam would commence. (U)

McCone questioned the efficacy of this incremental approach, but he had not yet decided what he thought the administration should do. His thinking was in transition, driven by growing concern over the shakiness of the Saigon government. In September, he had agreed with the low-key, reactive policy then under consideration—reprisals against Viet Cong terror attacks ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ and the Navy's DESOTO patrols, and limited South Vietnamese air and ground operations against the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He believed that a sustained air campaign north of the DMZ would be too dangerous to undertake then because the government of South Vietnam was too weak to respond to the increased insurgent activity that might result. In addition, Communist China would likely augment its assistance to North Vietnam.²² (U)

At the same time, McCone was realizing that the Khanh regime probably was unsalvageable. Three leadership changes had occurred between mid-August and early September, and several more would follow by early 1965—prompting Chester Cooper, an ONE officer on detail to the NSC, to remark later that "Khanh and [Gen. Duong Van] Minh checked in and out of their offices in the Presidential Palace like traveling salesmen at a commercial hotel." A distinct note of despair sounded in McCone's private comments about the fate of the South. In early October, he told Ambassador Sullivan, "I often wonder if what is really involved here is an erroneous concept that we in this country, by pouring in thousands of people and a hell of a lot of money, could train them [the South Vietnamese] and encourage them and inspire them to fight." "You almost have to say that the outlook is hopeless," he lamented to some journalists several weeks later. "[Y]ou just hang onto a little thread of hope that this government put together by this Council of Elders will take form and will get off the ground, and with civilian leadership and with Khanh devot-

²⁰ NSC Working Group, "Courses of Action in Southeast Asia," 21 November 1964, William Bundy memorandum to Rusk, "Issues Raised by Papers on Southeast Asia," 24 November 1964, Bundy memoranda of NSC Executive Committee meetings on 24 and 27 November 1964, NSC Executive Committee, "Position Paper on Southeast Asia," 2 December 1964, and Johnson untitled memorandum to Rusk, McNamara, and McCone, 7 December 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam* 1964, 916-29, 938-45, 958-60, 969-74, 984; *The Pentagon Papers* 3, 678. (U)

²¹ Cline et al. memorandum to McCone, "Critique of the (Bundy) Vietnam Working Group Papers," 21 November 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 15 ~~✗~~

²² McGeorge Bundy memorandum to the president, "Courses of Action for South Vietnam," 8 September 1964, and memorandum of meeting at the White House, 9 September 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam* 1964, 746-50. On Communist China's growing political and material support for North Vietnam during this period, see Zhai, chaps. 5-6. (U)

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ing himself to the military there might be some improvement. But that's an awful thin hope, I believe."²³

Those reservations notwithstanding, McCone joined the consensus on Option C, at least temporarily. By late November, he thought that if the administration started heavily bombing the North, the American public and the United States' allies would react with "anger, sorrow, and disgust." Any aerial attacks in retaliation for Viet Cong terrorism must target their infiltration and supply infrastructure (lines of communication and depots, for example) and keep collateral damage to an absolute minimum. The DCI also thought that "going big" risked reuniting the communist world, then in some disarray because of the Sino-Soviet split. He doubted, however, whether the Viet Cong insurgency could be brought under control quickly even if North Vietnam stopped supporting and directing it. He told the principals that the residual communist threat in the South was "much greater and much more difficult" than the uprising the British faced in Malaya in the early 1950s and "infinitely more serious" than the Hukbalahap rebellion that the United States helped the Philippine government quash a few years later. It would take the United States 10 years and major military and economic assistance to South Vietnam to stamp out the Viet Cong, he contended.²⁴

A Fork in the Road (U)

"By the end of January [1965]," historian George Herring has written, "the major argument against escalation [the Saigon government's failure to govern] had become the most compelling argument for it." The administration abandoned the concept of securing stability in the South before expanding US military involvement in the North and instead saw escalation as the preferred way of achieving some measure of political order in Saigon. Heavy bombing

above the DMZ and deployment of American combat forces in the South, in William Bundy's words, "would have some faint hope of really improving the Vietnamese situation." In late January, McGeorge Bundy and McNamara informed the president that "[b]oth of us are now pretty well convinced that our current policy can lead only to a disastrous defeat.... The time has come for harder choices": either negotiate a way out, or use whatever military force is needed to prevail. Just over a week later, Bundy returned from South Vietnam to report that "[t]he prospect in Vietnam is grim. The energy and persistence of the Viet Cong are astonishing." "[W]ithout new US action defeat appears inevitable.... There is still time to turn it around, but not much." The United States needed to adopt a policy of "sustained reprisal... against *any* VC act of violence to persons or property." Air and naval attacks on North Vietnam must be gradual and related to the military struggle in South. "The object would *not* be to 'win' an air war against Hanoi," but the operations nonetheless would be continuous to exact the maximum political value. "Even if it fails, the policy will be worth it." There was little alternative, recalled Chester Cooper, who accompanied Bundy. "There was a general disposition after we were there for a few days to feel that... either we had to get out or do something more than we were doing."²⁵ (U)

McCone came to that conclusion a bit sooner, having advised the president and the secretary of defense some weeks before that the United States had no chance of accomplishing its objectives unless it substantially increased airstrikes against the North and began low-level ground actions to check enemy infiltration into the South. Well into 1964, the DCI had doubts about how effectively massive air attacks on the North would hamper the communist insurgency in the South. Eventually, however, like other key administration policymakers, he stopped worrying as much

²³ Cooper, 246-47; transcripts of McCone meetings with Sullivan, 1 October 1964, and John Steele and Hedley Donovan, 17 November 1964, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 1.

²⁴ McCone memorandum, "Problems of Courses of Action—South Vietnam," 26 November 1964, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 15; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record... Meeting on 11/24/64—Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Ball, McGeorge Bundy, General Wheeler, McCone, and William Bundy," *ibid.*, box 2, folder 14. The immense difficulty that the United States and South Vietnam faced in suppressing the communist insurgency was violently underscored yet again on Christmas Eve 1964, when a car bomb exploded in Saigon outside the Brinks Hotel where US military officers lived. The attack killed two Americans and wounded 58 other persons. McCone advised the president against retaliating because Viet Cong culpability was too hard to prove. "Memorandum of Briefing of President Johnson... December 28, 1964," McCone Papers, box 5, folder 5.

²⁵ George C. Herring, *America's Longest War*, 127-28; William Bundy memorandum to Rusk, 6 January 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, II, *Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 32; McGeorge Bundy memoranda to Johnson, "Basic Policy in Vietnam," 27 January 1965, and "The Situation in Vietnam," 7 February 1965, *ibid.*, 95-97, 174-85; Cooper oral history interview at LBJ Library, quoted in Mann, 393. Ambassador Taylor's field reports typified the mood of administration officials at this time. On 6 January, for example, he wrote that "[w]e are faced here with a seriously deteriorating situation characterized by continued political turmoil, irresponsibility and division within the armed forces, lethargy in the pacification program, some anti-US feeling which could grow, signs of mounting terrorism by VC directly at US personnel and deepening discouragement and loss of morale throughout SVN." *FRUS*, 1964-1968, II, *Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 13. CIA analysts agreed; a special estimate in February judged that "US political leverage [in South Vietnam] appears to be at a low point." SNIE 53-65, "Short-Term Prospects in South Vietnam," 4 February 1965, *ibid.*, 143. (U)

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about the strength of the Saigon government and decided that the best approach was to go all out with Option B. The South would not, and probably could not, save itself, so the United States had no choice but to "go big" against the North. Even if a viable government were established in Saigon, the DCI said, the United States "could not win the way we were going" and must take "more dynamic action...a systematic series of attacks...starting in the south sector of North Vietnam and...work[ing] toward the north...[a] strike every day or at least every second day...regardless of what the Soviets say or what the Chinese Communists say or what anybody else says."²⁶ (U)

In taking that position, McCone differed with several senior Agency officers who advanced unsolicited opinions about the effect bombing would have on the North. William Colby thought expanding the war might cause a confrontation with Beijing. The head of FE Division's Vietnam-Cambodia branch bluntly called bombing a "bankrupt" move. Peer de Silva, the COS in Saigon, believed an air campaign would only provoke Hanoi into sending more troops down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Ray Cline thought US bombing would at best only buy time for South Vietnam. Lastly, Harold Ford told McCone directly that US policy in Vietnam was "becoming progressively divorced from reality" and that the "brave, resourceful, skilled, and patient" communist enemy would not be beaten into negotiations. "[T]he chances are considerably better than even," Ford wrote, "that the US will in the end have to disengage in Vietnam, and do so considerably short of our present objectives." McCone did not respond to this litany.²⁷ (U)

Instead, the DCI justified his view strategically with the domino theory, to which he steadfastly held despite ONE's judgment that it was untenable. McCone told the Senate Armed Services Committee in January 1965 that "if we pulled out of Vietnam...there would be a serious deterioration in Southeast Asia, and I think it would extend to Cambodia, to Laos, to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.... [I]t

would mean the acceleration of the communist movement throughout Southeast Asia." The reason was that the conflict in Vietnam "is no civil war. This is a straight Communist-directed guerrilla effort designed to remove the free thinking people of South Vietnam from any position of authority and take it over for Communism." That was why establishing a stable, popularly based government in the South was so hard. The communists were gaining control of more rural areas "not because [the peasants] are embracing the purposes of Communism, but because they are just war weary and tired and they just don't want to be shot at when they are out in the rice fields and will compromise almost everything to avoid that."²⁸ ~~XX~~

McCone's belief in the utility of heavy bombing probably drew on two experiences. As a member of the President's Air Policy Commission during 1947-48, he heard testimony, read reports, and participated in discussions on the decisive importance of air power in World War II. While he was under secretary of the Air Force during 1950-51, SAC's doctrine of strategic air power, so forcefully expounded by its commander, Gen. Curtis LeMay, dominated US policymakers' thinking on the subject. In addition, the Korean war had provided to some observers a real world lesson in the effect an aerial onslaught could have on an adversary's will to resist. With the ground war at an impasse and covert operations accomplishing nothing, heavy bombing of military and civilian targets was the only way to take the war to the enemy. Many Americans believed that large-scale bombing of dams in North Korea in the summer of 1953 had forced the Communist Chinese and North Koreans to stop their diplomatic obstructionism and last-minute terrain grabbing and agree to a truce. The Air Force chief of staff in 1953, Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg, summed up the attitude when he warned senior officers at the Air War College to "keep our eye on the goal of air power, which is to knock out the ability of a nation to fight." By the early 1960s, the Air Force's doctrine writers had outlined a role for strategic aircraft in low-intensity conflicts—a theory with which McCone agreed. To him, a stra-

²⁶ McCone, "Addendum to MR on Meeting w/President on 22 Oct 64," dated 26 October 1964, National Security Council File, Meetings with the President 4 January 1964-28 April 1965, LBJ Library; transcript of McCone interview with Rowland Evans and Stewart Alsop, 3 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 2; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the National Security Council...", 8 February 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 193, 195-96. (U)

²⁷ Ford, *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers*, 73-76. (U)

²⁸ McGeorge Bundy, "Memorandum of a Meeting, White House...September 9, 1964...", *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 752-53; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President re South Vietnam," 3 February 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 130; Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...Telephone Conversation with Mr. McCone on 6 November 1964," and McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara on 16 November 1964," McCone Papers, box 2, folder 14; McCone testimony to Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 January 1965, 69, 73, 83, 104-105, *ibid.*, box 3, folder 19. In early February, McCone similarly told PFIAB that "both the North Vietnamese and the ChiComs think that the war is in hand from their point of view," and that "there was abundant intelligence which says that Thailand would be next." Kirkpatrick memorandum, "Meeting of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 4 February 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 19, folder 382. ~~XX~~

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CHAPTER 17



McCone's military recommendation for Vietnam: strategic bombing (U)

Photo: US Air Force

tegic air campaign, run without regard for immediate tactical considerations, was essential for countering an externally supported insurgency of the scope that the Viet Cong were waging in South Vietnam.²⁹ (U)

Some policy realism also contributed to McCone's advocacy of using strategic air power against the North. President Johnson would not pull the United States out of Vietnam, so the DCI argued for what he judged to be the most effective use of America's military capabilities—one that would exploit its technological superiority and economic resources while avoiding the commitment of a large ground force to a

ordering the Viet Cong to temporarily suspend attacks in the South. Accordingly, "I'd go win this one," the DCI told the president. "I'd do whatever was necessary to win it."³⁰ (U)

McCone's advocacy of heavy bombing moved him outside the administration consensus and made him seem like a hawkish counterpart to the solitary "dove" in the Vietnam policymaking circle, Under Secretary of State George Ball—whose persistent argument for withdrawal and negotiation has led one biographer to label him the president's "in-house hair shirt." This McCone-Ball analogy is largely accurate.

²⁹ Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power*, 17–19, 23, 35–36; Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950–1953*, 159–63; Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950–1953*, 666–79; idem, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: A History of Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force, 1907–1984*, vol. 1, 291–304, 335–51, 419–67 passim, vol. 2, chaps. 1–2 passim; Thomas C. Hone, "Strategic Bombing Constrained: Korea and Vietnam," in R. Cargill Hall, ed., *Case Studies in Strategic Bombardment*, 488–90; Moody, 158–66; Donald J. Mrozek, *Air Power and the Ground War in Vietnam*, 17–24; ORR, "Historical Notes on the Use of Air Power as a Weapon of Interdiction," CIA/RR ER 66-8, May 1966, 29, 32, HS Files, Job 03-01724R, box 4, folder 6. What McCone had in mind was the use of "strategic air warfare," defined by Air Force doctrine writers as

Air combat and support operations, designed to effect, through the systematic application of force to a selected series of vital targets, the progressive destruction and disintegration of the enemy's war-making capacity to a point where he no longer retains the ability or will to wage war. Vital targets may include key manufacturing systems, sources of raw material, critical material, stockpiles, power systems, transportation systems, communication facilities, concentrations of uncommitted elements of enemy armed forces, key agricultural areas, and other such target systems.

Moody, xi, n. 5. (U)

³⁰ McCone memorandum to the president, "Probable Communist Reactions to Certain US or US-Sponsored Courses of Action in Vietnam and Laos," 28 July 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, I, *Vietnam 1964*, 586; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with The President re South Vietnam," 3 February 1965, *ibid.*, II, *Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 130; SNIE 10-3-65, "Communist Reactions to Possible US Actions," 11 February 1965, *ibid.*, 244–50; transcript of McCone interview with Edward Weintal (*Newsweek*), 19 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3. The Department of State dissented from the community's October 1964 assessment, holding that Hanoi more likely would send its own troops into Laos and South Vietnam. The dissent proved correct. Palmer, 33–34. (U)

~~SECRET~~*The Saga in Southeast Asia Continues (U)*

The only prominent decisionmakers to agree with the DCI were the JCS, but even they were divided on the issue in private. Despite the popular stereotype that they were anxious to blast North Vietnam to rubble, the service chiefs disagreed on the utility of an all-out bombing offensive against the North. None of them doubted that the United States would enjoy air superiority north of the DMZ or that bombing would inflict serious damage on enemy military and economic targets. Only the Air Force and the Marine Corps, however, believed that a sustained campaign of heavy bombing would force Hanoi to suspend support for the Viet Cong. The Army and Navy were unconvinced. Despite these disagreements, however, and to present a united front to the White House and the public, the service chiefs kept their doubts about strategic bombing off the record and recommended using the US bomber arsenal in an escalatory way (Option C). In that context, the hawk McCone was almost as alone on his own limb as the dove Ball was on his.³¹ (U)

President Johnson, who had no historical experience with heavy bombing, resisted using it all-out against North Vietnam. In September 1964, he declined to authorize an intense aerial attack on the North; McGeorge Bundy wrote at the time that "in [the president's] judgment the proper answer to those advocating immediate and extensive action against the North was that we should not do this until our side could defend itself in the streets of Saigon." As late as December 1964, he complained to Ambassador Taylor that "[e]very time I get a military recommendation[,] it seems to me it calls for large-scale bombing. I have never felt that this war will be won from the air."³² (U)

By mid-February 1965, however, the president moved toward a more aggressive posture. Lethal Viet Cong attacks against American facilities at Pleiku and Qui Nhon and another change in government in Saigon in mid-February

forced him to concede that there probably never would be enough order in the South to justify waiting to intensify military action. "Johnson's highest priority for Vietnam" then, according to historian Robert Dallek, "was to settle on a well-defined, consistent policy that held out prospects of ending the conflict and convincing people that he knew what he was doing." He told his advisers that he "had kept the shotgun over the mantel and the bullets in the basement for a long time now," but "cowardice has gotten us into more wars than response has." In the president's judgment, limited, sustained bombing, escalated according to how Hanoi reacted to it, stood some chance of forestalling both a communist victory and a divisive domestic debate—the latter almost assured if he ordered a ground offensive. But Johnson was still planning to practice "flexible response" and not deliver the full force of American air power. "We face a choice of going forward or running," he declared. "We have chosen the first alternative. All of us agree on this, but there remains some difference as to how fast we should go forward."³³ (U)

The president's decision on 13 February to begin ROLLING THUNDER marked a turning point in US policy, despite his claim that "we seek no wider war." A campaign of regular bombing attacks went well beyond the "tit-for-tat" reprisal strikes that had been the practice since the Tonkin Gulf affair. The scope and intensity of the bombing would increase gradually, use of napalm was authorized, and pilots could strike alternative targets without prior approval if they could not reach their original destinations. Over 100 US and South Vietnamese aircraft—the largest number used on one day up to then—flew the first missions on 2 March against an ammunition depot and a naval base. In April alone, 3,600 sorties hit fuel dumps, bridges, munitions factories, and power plants across the DMZ. "The air war," writes George Herring, "quickly grew from a sporadic, halting effort into a regular, determined program."³⁴ (U)

³¹ David L. Di Leo, *George Ball, Vietnam, and the Rethinking of Containment*, 125; Palmer, 32–33; Buzzanco, 171–72, 193–94; JCS memorandum to McNamara, "Courses of Action in South East Asia," 23 November 1964, *FRUS, 1964–1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 934–35. (U)

³² McGeorge Bundy, "Memorandum of a Meeting, White House...September 9, 1964...", *FRUS, 1964–1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 751; Johnson telegram to Taylor, CAP 64375, 30 December 1964, *ibid.*, 1058. (U)

³³ Colby memorandum for the record, "White House Meeting on Vietnam, 6 February 1965," *FRUS, 1964–1968, II, Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 159–60; Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 248, 254–55; Clodfelter, 51–52, 58–64. The Viet Cong attack on the US Army barracks at Pleiku on 7 February, which killed eight Americans and wounded 126, "pulled the rug out from any sitting and waiting," according to Chester Cooper. Cooper oral history at LBJ Library, quoted in Mann, 393. In retaliation, the president ordered 154 US and South Vietnamese aircraft to bomb four North Vietnamese army barracks in the southern panhandle. Documents 76–81 in *FRUS, 1964–1968, II, Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 155–72. On 10 February, Viet Cong guerrillas bombed a hotel housing US soldiers in Qui Nhon; 23 were killed and more than 20 were wounded—the most American casualties in any such incident in Vietnam so far. Documents 95, 97–99, 106 in *ibid.*, 212, 214–25, 236–37. A succession of leadership changes in Saigon in mid-February, culminating in Khanh's resignation on the 21st, did nothing to end the political malaise in the capital. The holdover civilian cabinet had little authority and no ambition, and popular enthusiasm for the war effort continued to wane. (U)

³⁴ Department of State telegram to Embassy Saigon, DEPTTEL 1718, 13 February 1965, *FRUS, 1964–1968, II, Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 263; Herring, *America's Longest War*, 129–30. (U)

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CHAPTER 17

A Final, Futile Push (U)

To McCone, ROLLING THUNDER was no solution. Instead, he regarded it as just the kind of graduated, reactive, politically calculated approach that he never thought would work in Vietnam. "We must not lose sight of our purpose," he told the NSC, "[which is] to help [the] South Vietnamese win freedom from Communist aggression.... [This goal] should not be compromised for collateral reasons." Tentativeness had been the problem with US policy in Vietnam since 1961, McCone contended. By moving in American military forces gradually without a defined purpose, "[i]n some ways we lifted the responsibility for the situation off the shoulders of the South Vietnamese, but we didn't provide the muscle to put it on our own shoulders." This incremental approach left the United States vulnerable to the charge that it was practicing "just another form of colonialism" and was not truly interested in preserving South Vietnam's right of self-determination. McCone conceded that strategic bombing might cause North Vietnam to launch a "burst operation" against the South to quickly defeat its army, topple its government, and force out US troops. He thought, however, that if Hanoi judged that the bombing was threatening its economy, it would curtail guerrilla operations in the South "and wait for a sunny day, making some pretense at negotiations." He told the president that most USIB members agreed with that conclusion, especially if airstrikes were flown more often than planned under ROLLING THUNDER and hit targets above the 19th parallel in the heart of North Vietnam.³⁵

McCone opposed deploying US ground troops to South Vietnam and did not want the administration to use Viet Cong attacks on American facilities there to justify doing so. Disagreeing with the Pentagon's conclusion that US installations in the South could not be protected from guerrilla raids without sending a large contingent of combat troops, he directed the DDP to develop a plan for establishing informant networks around American bases to serve as "Paul Reverses" if the Viet Cong tried to launch attacks like the one

on Pleiku. He feared that if the joint US-South Vietnamese intelligence apparatus could not discover such activity nearby, a bigger surprise—North Vietnamese or Chinese intervention, or a massive Viet Cong uprising, for example—might occur. The shock undoubtedly would produce calls from inside and outside the administration for a big buildup of ground forces. McCone consequently charged all departments represented on USIB to step up collection efforts against North Vietnamese targets and to give "the closest attention...to every available indicator, no matter how tenuous." As DDCI Carter passed on McCone's directive to the Agency, "We all need to remain cool and objective but...[y]ou can't afford to ignore any report, no matter how wild it may seem...It is absolutely essential that the analysts state their requirements...[and] be in the closest touch with collectors...."³⁶

The Intelligence Community's mixed record of working the North Vietnam target indicated how formidable a task the DCI was asking it to perform.

twice as many communist prisoners of war were under interrogation at any given time than in the previous year, more aerial reconnaissance missions were being flown, and COMINT and HUMINT reporting had increased somewhat in volume if not in quality. The Agency had little success, however, at inducing defections by Viet Cong or North Vietnamese army personnel or in debriefing travelers to the North, and much reporting through US military channels was either redundant or unreliable.³⁷

CIA's other clandestine activities in Vietnam offered little to hearten McCone during this time, either.

so the Agency's pacification programs—the Political Action, Counter Terror, and Census Grievance Teams—languished. The CIA-run propaganda program was still "penny-ante," according to a senior

³⁵ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the National Security Council...", 8 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 6, folder 11; transcript of McCone interview with Evans and Alsop, 3 February 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 2; McCone memorandum to the president, "Communist Reactions to US Air Attacks on North Vietnam," 13 March 1965, and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary McNamara—18 March 1965," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, II, *Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 437, 459.

³⁶ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the National Security Council...", 8 February 1965, and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting at the White House, 10 February 1965...", McCone Papers, box 6, folder 11; McCone memorandum to chairman of USIB Critical Collection Problems Committee, "Review of Resources for Intelligence Coverage of Indications of Possible Intervention in South Vietnam by Communist Forces," with attachment, 25 February 1965, CMS Files, Job 82R00370R, box 5, folder 28; Knoche, "Memorandum for the Record," 26 February, with attachments, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 341.

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FE Division officer at the time; "there are insufficient consideration, insufficient personnel and insufficient funds devoted to psychological endeavors." Moreover, McNamara's interest in OPLAN 34A faded in 1965 once US bombing began and US ground forces landed. In his judgment, the struggle had become a conventional conflict, and what he later called the "trifling efforts" of [] MACV-SOG could contribute little to its success.³⁸ Historians Kenneth Conboy and Dale Andradé have summarized this line of reasoning: "Rather than spending months preparing for the insertion of a sabotage team armed with a few rockets, American planes could now rain down thousands of times more explosives during a single afternoon."³⁹ ~~X~~

The NSC still wanted to use the "quiet option," however, so in response to its request, McCone submitted a much expanded covert action plan to complement the strategic bombing of the North that he was pressing the administration to undertake. Drafted by the DDP, the 12-point proposal included extending support to political, labor, farmer, and student groups; expanding political action teams in disputed areas; organizing *Montagnard* self-defense units and assisting local partisan groups; expanding harassment teams in Viet Cong-held territory; and developing irregular elements to locate, infiltrate, and seize enemy communications sites. The plan, McCone advised the president, would "improve the viability of the [Saigon] government...promote cohesion within the South Vietnamese military structure...encourage [the] South Vietnamese people to support their government and...participate more actively in the defense of their country." McGeorge Bundy thought CIA's proposal "should be explored urgently." The administration adopted some aspects of the Agency plan, but, []

[] assigned implementation of most of them to Army Special Forces. When Bundy raised the idea of recreating CIA's defunct Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, McCone demurred. "[I]t was probably too late...the effort had gone past the point of no return...[and] more or less eroded away." The embassy and MACV opposed the program then and would do so now; [] could not be reversed. When Bundy asked McCone if he had told the president about the problems with the turnover, the DCI said he had not because "it would be construed as 'bureaucracy and parochialism.'" Bundy chided him for that reasoning, saying "it would be too bad to lose the game out there and then have us say 'If you'd only done it our way we wouldn't have lost.'" Asked if that was fair to the president, McCone simply replied that "the decision had been made and could not be reversed."⁴⁰ ~~X~~

In his last month as DCI, McCone made several attempts to persuade Johnson and his Vietnam policy coterie not to let the United States get drawn into a slowly escalating conflict, especially on the ground. His basic point in this final effort was the same as before: Hit the enemy fast and hard with devastating aerial firepower to make them immediately feel the cost of a protracted struggle and scare them to the negotiating table. ROLLING THUNDER as currently implemented, he told the NSC, was having little or no effect on the North Vietnamese. "Hanoi remains unconvinced that they [sic] cannot win out militarily. They are not yet ready to negotiate." He did not oppose committing ground troops, only a piecemeal engagement unsupported by a major escalation of the air war—particularly massive airstrikes north of the DMZ.⁴¹ (U)

³⁸ Clandestine missions under OPLAN 34A and the US Navy's DESOTO patrols, briefly suspended after the Tonkin Gulf incidents in August 1964, had resumed in September under NSAM No. 314. After another supposed North Vietnamese attack on US destroyers in the Gulf on 18 September, President Johnson halted the DESOTO patrols. Later that month, the 303 Committee decided to review monthly mission plans under OPLAN 34A to avoid conflicts such as had occurred in late July and early August when sabotage attacks and ELINT patrols had overlapped. NSAM No. 314 (untitled), 10 September 1964, and Bundy memorandum to the president, "The Gulf of Tonkin Incident, September 18," in *FRUS, 1964-1968, I, Vietnam 1964*, 759, 778-81; Jessup, "Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 24 September 1964," and Carter, "Memorandum for the Record...303 Committee Meeting...24 September [1964],..." McCone Papers, box 1, folder 7. ~~X~~

³⁹ Ahern, *CIA and the Generals*, 31-33; [] memorandum to Elder, "Mr. Rowan's Memorandum for the President...", 18 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 3, folder 17; Shultz, 301, 323; Conboy and Andradé, 141. ~~X~~

⁴⁰ McCone letter to the president, 31 March 1965, with attached Helms memorandum to McCone, "CIA Proposals for Limited Covert Civilian Political Action in Vietnam," same date, Bundy memorandum, "Key Elements for Discussion...", 1 April 1965, McCone untitled memorandum to Carter, 1 April 1965, and NSAM No. 328 (untitled), 6 April 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 494-97, 508, 512-14, 538; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. McGeorge Bundy...", 19 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16. ~~X~~

The Agency's proposal was one of several multifaceted plans that US military and civilian officials developed around then. When Ambassador Taylor was faced with implementing a 21-point military program, a 41-point nonmilitary program, a 16-point US Information Service program, and CIA's 12-point program, he cabled McGeorge Bundy that US policy seemed to be fashioned "as if we can win here somehow on a point score." Quoted in Leslie H. Gelb with Richard K. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked*, 117. (U)

The day before McCone presented the covert action plan, a Viet Cong car bomb exploded outside the US embassy, killing two Americans and 20 Vietnamese and wounding 200 persons. A CIA secretary was among the dead, and COS Peer de Silva was partially blinded. McCone arranged for a special medical evacuation flight for injured Agency personnel that took them nonstop from the Philippines to California. De Silva, 265-70; Johnson, *The Right Hand of Power*, 432-35. (U)

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CHAPTER 17

By then, policymakers knew McCone's refrain by heart, and the president was losing confidence and trust in him. Recently in private, Johnson had described him as someone "that might get offboard later" and should be "view[ed]...very carefully." The president, despite his own doubts about the war ("I don't see any way of winning"; "there ain't no daylight in Vietnam"), was set on his course. Convinced that overwhelming air power could not prevail ("[a]irplanes ain't worth a damn") and that American ground forces must be sent in, he tuned out McCone, who believed just the opposite. With criticism of the administration's limited airstrikes already emanating from some quarters of Congress, the media, and the public, and with the president needing to keep political support for his far-reaching domestic program, McCone's more belligerent position was untenable anyway. The DCI seemed to know this. As political dissent and social discontent grew inside the United States, he realized that the United States would get caught in a contradiction if it went all out to defend South Vietnam from falling to communism. America was trying to be "a shining beacon to the world...[but] unless we look inwardly and straighten up some of the problems here, as long as we have a situation so deteriorating...[a]s long as we've got these race problems, as long as we've got crime, as long as we've got the youth problems...we can't serve as that beacon."⁴² (U)

McCone persisted, judging that the harm Vietnam's fall would cause to US national interests outweighed other considerations. After a meeting of the NSC on 1 April 1965, at which Johnson approved a gradual escalation of airstrikes against the North and an active combat role for US troops in the South, McCone circulated a memorandum to Rusk, McNamara, Bundy, and Taylor in which he argued vigorously that the measures were too little, too late. The "slowly ascending tempo" of bombing had not improved the situation on the ground but had made the communists more

intractable and increased the likelihood of Soviet or Chinese aid to North Vietnam. If the airstrikes did not achieve measurable results soon, the administration would face growing domestic and international pressure to call them off. "[T]ime will run against us...and I think the North Vietnamese are counting on this." A large but ultimately fruitless commitment of US ground forces appeared almost inevitable to the DCI unless the administration changed tactics.

I think what we are doing is starting on a track which involves ground force operations which, in all probability, will have limited effectiveness against guerrillas.... [F]orcing submission of the VC can only be brought about by a decision in Hanoi. Since the contemplated actions against the North are modest in scale, they will not impose unacceptable damage on it.... [O]ur proposed track offers great danger of simply encouraging Chinese Communist and Soviet support of the DRV and VC cause if for no other reason than the risk for both will be minimum.... We will find ourselves mired down in combat in the jungle in a military effort that we cannot win, and from which we will have extreme difficulty in extracting ourselves.... [I]f we are to change the mission of the [US] ground forces, we must also change the ground rules of the [air]strikes against North Vietnam. We must hit them harder, more frequently, and inflict greater damage. Instead of avoiding the MiGs, we must go in and take them out. A bridge here and there will not do the job. We must strike their air fields, their petroleum resources, power stations and the military compounds. This...must be done promptly and with minimum restraint.⁴³ (U)

McCone strongly disputed McNamara's proposal in mid-April 1965 that US bombing stay at its current level

⁴¹ "Summary Notes of the 550th Meeting of the National Security Council," 26 March 1965, McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Meeting," 21 April 1965, and BNE memorandum, same date, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 482-83, 580, 593, 595. On 6 April, the JCS concurred with CIA that the bombing campaign had not curtailed North Vietnamese military activities significantly. Gen. Earle Wheeler (chairman, JCS) memorandum to McNamara, "Over-all Appraisal of Air Strikes Against North Vietnam 7 February 1965 to 4 April 1965," *ibid.*, 535-37. McCone never indicated—probably because it was beyond his area of responsibility—how many ground troops he thought the United States needed to deploy in Vietnam, but evidently he thought the 82,000 called for in the Pentagon's schedule in late April was not enough. Department of State telegram to Embassy Saigon, DEPTTEL 2397, 22 April 1965, *ibid.*, 602. (U)

⁴² *Reaching for Glory*, 186, 194, 213; transcript of McCone interview with Evans and Alsop, 3 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 2. Johnson's suspicion of McCone's connections to the Kennedys showed in January 1965 when he complained that the late president's loyalists were accusing him of using the DCI to blame John Kennedy for the Vietnam stalemate. "[T]hey have these little parties out at Georgetown...they had a party last night...and the Kennedy crowd decided that I had framed up [sic] to get [the] Armed Services [Committee] in the Senate to call McCone to put the Vietnam War on Kennedy's tomb. And that I had a conspiracy going on to show that it was Kennedy's immaturity and poor judgment that originally led us into this thing." McCone did not make such a statement to the committee during his January 1965 appearance. *Reaching for Glory*, 157. (U)

⁴³ McCone untitled memorandum to Rusk, McNamara, Bundy, and Taylor, 2 April 1965, *FRUS, 1964-1968, II, Vietnam, January-June 1965*, 522-24. In his memoir, President Johnson selectively quoted the parts of this memorandum in which McCone endorsed heavy bombing—implying that the DCI approved of ROLLING THUNDER—while omitting those that expressed his opposition to an American role in the ground war. Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, 140. (U)

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and more US ground troops be sent to the South. (The first 3,500 Marines had landed near Da Nang on 8 March, and more Marines, authorized to conduct offensive operations, deployed to Hue in April.) The secretary of defense said increased deployments were necessary to protect US forces already there and to release South Vietnamese troops to fight elsewhere. According to the DCI, McNamara's plan changed the purpose of the airstrikes on the North. Instead of being the principal means of forcing Hanoi to negotiate, they would become just another tactic of harassment and interdiction. McCone argued that the communists could absorb present damage, that economic targets in the North must also be hit, and that US ground force deployments must be part of a coordinated strategy to intensify pressure against the North on all fronts. Lacking such a strategy, the United States would face a "slow...deliberate...progressive" communist buildup that "would always confront us with an increasing demand for men, increasingly serious problems, and increasing casualties." The Johnson administration had several strategic options in Southeast Asia to choose among in early 1965, some more politically feasible than others. McCone's preferred course may have been no more likely to succeed than the few that were considered, and there was no



Marines land near Da Nang in March 1965. McCone advised against waging a conventional ground war in Vietnam. (U)

compelling historical case in favor of unlimited bombing. The most that can be said with certainty about the approach he promoted is that the Johnson administration never tried it.⁴⁴ ~~X~~

On his final day as DCI, 28 April 1965, McCone gave President Johnson a letter summarizing his views on the drawbacks of limited airstrikes, the tenacity of the communists in achieving their long-term goals, and the likely political and diplo-

matic consequences of failing to achieve progress soon. "I am not talking about bombing centers of population or killing innocent people," he assured the president. "I am proposing to 'tighten the tourniquet' on North Vietnam so as to make the communists pause to weigh the losses they are taking against their prospects for gains. We should make it hard for the Viet Cong to win in the south and simultaneously hard for Hanoi to endure our attacks in the north." After hearing McCone make his case one more time, Johnson "accepted the letter and placed it on his desk without comment." McCone concluded his dealings with the administration on Vietnam by observing afterward: "I personally feel this is as far as I can go or, for that matter, as far as the Agency should go in this matter."⁴⁵ ~~X~~

⁴⁴ McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...NSC Meeting—20 Apr 65," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting of the NSC Executive Committee—22 Apr 65," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 11. ~~X~~

President Johnson authorized the deployment of two more Marine battalions and a Marine air squadron on 6 April in NSAM No. 328. The NSAM also directed an increase in logistics forces in preparation for larger ground deployments, and expanded the mission of US forces from base security to include active combat. NSAM No. 328 was highly secret, distributed only to Rusk, McNamara, and McCone—the minimum needed to carry it out. The president warned them to avoid "premature publicity" about the new deployments and mission. Implementation "should be taken in ways that should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy, and official statements on these troop movements will be made only with the direct approval of the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State." "[T]hese movements and changes should be understood as being gradual and wholly consistent with existing policy." NSAM No. 328 (untitled), 6 April 1965, *FRUS 1964–1968, II, Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 537–39. (U)

⁴⁵ McCone letter to the president and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President alone...", both dated 28 April 1965, *FRUS, 1964–1968, II, Vietnam, January–June 1965*, 613–15. McCone—with his successor, Adm. William Raborn present—made the same points to Rusk, who deflected the suggestion by saying that McNamara, Bundy, and he had considered the DCI's views but decided to hold to the present course. McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...", 27 April 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16. The day McCone stepped down, Sherman Kent prepared a memorandum for the president, with which OCI and FE Division concurred, supporting the basic points of McCone's 28 April letter. Kent, "Comment on Mr. McCone's Views of 28 April 1965," DCI Files, Job 80R01580R, box 16, folder 341. ~~X~~

McCone's continual pressure for heavier bombing of the North had one unintended effect within the Johnson administration: convincing Clark Clifford to oppose continued escalation. In May 1965, President Johnson asked Clifford to read a private letter in which McCone argued that putting more troops on the ground required a big increase in airstrikes. According to Clifford, "the powerful internal logic of McCone's arguments helped me clarify my thinking," and he advised the president against sending more ground forces to Vietnam. Clifford, 409–10. (U)

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Transition (U)

John McCone's frustrations as Director of Central Intelligence mounted so substantially during the first several months of 1964 that by mid-year he had decided to resign—perhaps imminently. Throughout his professional career he had been used to controlling the organizations he was responsible for, and he was not accustomed to answering to overseers or to competing for influence with equally assertive rivals while wrestling with seemingly insoluble problems. He had captained his engineering and shipbuilding enterprises largely as he had seen fit, and at the Department of the Air Force and the AEC he had wielded command over focused organizations dealing with a relatively narrow range of issues and activities and a limited constituency of patrons and interests. As DCI, in contrast, McCone lacked formal authority over most of the massive and diffuse intelligence bureaucracies that he nominally directed, and he did not secure the political resources in the White House and Congress that would have enabled him to exercise the power he sought. He reportedly told an aide: "I've been trying to get [President] Johnson to sit down and read these papers [the Agency's annual estimates of Soviet strategic intentions]. When I can't even get the President to read the summaries, it's time for me to leave."¹ (U)

In addition to these institutional and political limitations, McCone gave several specific reasons for resigning. His influence in policymaking circles was declining at the same time public criticism of CIA was reaching new levels of intensity. The "frightful" and "sickening" *Invisible Government* episode, as he described it, particularly disheartened him. He confided to a congressional friend in May 1964 that "I took this job over to try and build it [CIA] up and if the attitude around town is to try and knock it down...I have got a wonderful home in Pasadena and I am not going to stay here for 30 minutes [more]." A few weeks later, he told President Johnson for the first time that he wanted to step down soon, saying that he believed he was getting too old to run a large government agency. Speaking in confi-

dence to a trusted journalistic contact several months later, McCone outlined the bureaucratic and political aspects of the job that dissatisfied him.

[T]here's a great many facets [sic] of this job that are quite out of character with me.... I like to be able to discuss what I'm doing more freely than I can...and I'm very, very sensitive to a responsibility for an agency and for the work of a lot of dedicated men and then have them beaten up unmercifully, and unfairly, and incorrectly, and be unable to answer back.... This is the kind of thing that wakes me up at 3:00 [in the morning]...some of the things that are said are just absolutely incredible.

Lastly, McCone wanted to devote more attention to his business interests, which since the late 1950s he had run in his spare time, and to his and his wife's personal lives.² ~~X~~

The Search for a Successor (U)

McCone recalled that his initial offer to resign in mid-1964 "changed the intimacy of the relationship [with President Johnson].... I could feel it in a hundred ways." Despite their personal and policy differences, however, the president tried to dissuade the DCI. To avoid creating any political problems for the administration, McCone agreed to stay on, but only until after the November election. In October, he apparently thought he was being rehabilitated. The president asked McCone to accompany him to Herbert Hoover's funeral in New York on the 26th. According to a CIA official who worked with the DCI, he "was as excited as a kid with a new toy." Johnson's gesture was a partisan calculation, however; he figured that as the administration's most prominent conservative Republican, McCone should appear at the funeral of the doyen of the GOP's Old Guard. Despite the lengthy discussion the DCI and the president had while

¹ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 167. Helms recalled McCone saying several times that one of the reasons he left the government was that he did not get to see the president enough and did not feel that he had enough influence in the White House. Helms OH, 8. (U)

² Transcripts of McCone telephone conversations with Robert Lovett and Sen. Leverett Saltonstall, 19 and 20 May 1964, McCone Papers, box 10, folder 6; transcript of McCone meeting with Joseph Alsop, 13 March 1965, and interview with Edward Weintal (*Newsweek*), 19 March 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 3. ~~X~~

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traveling, the trip did not lead to a warming in their relations.³ ~~(S)~~

Afterward, Johnson did not try very hard to find a successor to McCone. In mid-December, the DCI reminded the president that he had offered his resignation six months before and had agreed to stay only past the election. It was time to think about a new DCI, he told Johnson. Rumors of McCone's departure were circulated in the press, along with names of possible successors (including Roswell Gilpatric, Cyrus Vance, Nicholas Katzenbach, Maxwell Taylor, Paul Nitze, and Henry Cabot Lodge). McCone complained that the president "hasn't done a damn thing about it [replacing him]—except he talks to Clark Clifford during lunch some days."⁴ ~~(S)~~

At a meeting with Johnson in late February 1965, the DCI took the initiative by submitting a list of 15 candidates and telling the president when he would be leaving. Johnson replied that he had four names under consideration (he did not say which) and would decide soon. In the meantime, he wanted McCone to remain until 1 May. The DCI replied that 1 April or earlier would suit him better. As a compromise, the president proposed that McCone stay until the end of April but feel free to be away from Langley as much as his personal business required. CIA was efficiently organized and well-managed, and Marshall Carter had run it well in McCone's absence before, Johnson remarked.⁵ ~~(S)~~

Who did McCone think should succeed him? He believed an intelligence professional probably would be best suited for the job. He did not want the White House to demean the position of DCI by filling it with a patronage appointment like "some hotshot businessman or chairman of the Democratic National Committee in the State of Colorado." Nor did he think a military commander, unless possessed of unusual abilities, experience, and independence would be appropriate because CIA might become "a tool of the Pentagon." He doubted that an experienced civilian public servant with aspirations to become secretary of

defense, secretary of state, or ambassador to a major Western European country would want to risk tarnishing his reputation by serving in the controversy-ridden post. Accordingly, although he personally preferred an outsider—initially Gilpatric, then Acting Attorney General Katzenbach—McCone recommended Richard Helms ("superb") and Ray Cline ("a man of very great intellectual capacity"), with, according to Walter Elder, a nod toward Helms. McCone thought Lyman Kirkpatrick, the executive director and comptroller, would be "a hell of a good manager" but that his disability would diminish his influence and convey an image of reduced vitality. ("[E]very time an emergency is called...when the cameras are around at the White House doors, if the Director of Central Intelligence has to pull himself into a wheelchair...I think that would be bad.") Regardless of his successor's résumé, McCone believed the new DCI must have a very close relationship with the president—"that if the President was home at eleven o'clock at night and got to worrying over some development in South Vietnam, or what[ever], would call him up and say, 'Jump in your car and come down here and sit beside me on this bed, because I want to talk about this before I go to sleep'"—in short, just the opposite of what McCone had with Johnson.⁶ ~~(S)~~

Much of the search for McCone's successor was conducted by PFIAB Chairman Clifford and John Macy, former head of the Civil Service Commission, who joined the White House in late 1964 as a presidential "talent scout." Besides the intelligence careerists, Clifford and Macy considered defense establishment pillars such as Taylor and Gilpatric. McCone told McGeorge Bundy and Dean Rusk that picking Taylor "would be very damaging" because of the general's long history of conflict with the Agency

While I knew Taylor well and favorably," McCone said, "no appointment...would be more harmful to the Agency...." Other names floated in the press included Joseph Carroll, the director of DIA, and William Bundy, the assistant secretary

³ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 167; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with the President—22 October 1964," McCone Papers, box 6, folder 10; transcript of McCone interview with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 26 February 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 3. ~~(S)~~

⁴ Transcript of McCone interview with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 366–67; Robert J. Donovan, "John McCone Resigns as CIA Director," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 1964, McCone clipping file, HIC. ~~(S)~~

⁵ Transcript of McCone meeting with Alsop, 13 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 373. ~~(S)~~

⁶ Bromley Smith (NSC) memorandum to the president, "Your meeting with John McCone today...", 17 November 1964, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 475; transcripts of McCone interviews with Schlesinger, 26 February 1965, and Weintal, 19 March 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 3; transcript of McCone interview with Rowland Evans and Stewart Alsop, 3 February 1965, *ibid.*, folder 2; Helms/McAuliffe OH, 9; Elder/OH, 12; Elder/McAuliffe OH1, 35; Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 373–74. ~~(S)~~

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of state for Far Eastern affairs. As of mid-March, McCone said he still did not have the slightest idea whom the president had in mind. At the end of the month, he recalled some years later, Johnson called him and talked about a retired US Navy admiral named William Raborn. In early April, however, Johnson was still privately vetting new names, such as Burke Marshall, an assistant attorney general concerned with civil rights, and David Bell, the director of AID.⁷

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Like almost everyone else at CIA, McCone was stunned to hear on 11 April that Johnson had selected Raborn. The admiral was a party loyalist from Texas, had managed the Polaris submarine program, and enjoyed good rapport with Congress. At his staff meeting the following morning, McCone's voice and countenance evidenced his displeasure, although he did not comment on the appointment. Several years later, he termed Raborn—with whom he had worked when the AEC was involved in nuclear-powered submarines—"an unfortunate choice...thrown into a job he wasn't really equipped for....

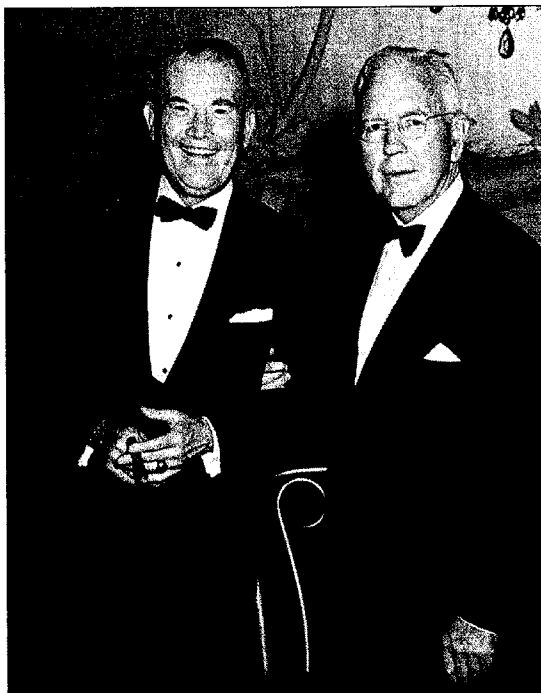
[A]t no time would I have considered him for that post." McCone observed that the DCI "[had] to be kind of an operational manager and play somewhat the role of a college president"—responsibilities

requiring "a different kind of mentality" from that of "a hard-driving, technical man" like Raborn. Beyond the White House's lack of consultation and Raborn's apparent unsuitability, McCone had reason to take the admiral's nomination as a personal slight. As intelligence historian Christopher Andrew has noted, "[b]y appointing Raborn, Johnson showed that he rejected McCone's style of leadership and was more interested in curbing the CIA's independence than in improving the quality of its intelligence. He saw in Raborn a reliably compliant DCI whose administrative efficiency would ensure that the [A]gency did not rock the presidential boat."⁸

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During the brief transition, McCone took Raborn on courtesy calls around Langley and Washington to introduce the admiral to CIA officers, administration officials, and congressional overseers. The DCI also brought Raborn to some morning staff meetings to acclimate him to the daily flow of business at the Agency. Meanwhile, McCone's work pace slowed as he prepared to step down. He sat for his official portrait, attended an Agency farewell dinner for him

and Carter at the City Tavern Club, received the National Security Medal from the president, and said goodbye to Robert Kennedy.⁹

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McCone and Adm. William Raborn (U)

⁷ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 167; Emmette S. Redford and Richard T. McCulley, *White House Operations*, 138; transcript of McCone meeting with [redacted] and William Colby, 14 May 1963, McCone Papers, box 7, folder 3; McCone, "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Mr. McGeorge Bundy...", 17 March 1965, and "Memorandum for the Record...Discussion with Secretary Rusk...", 18 March 1965, *ibid.*, box 2, folder 16; transcript of McCone interview with Weintal, 19 March 1965, *ibid.*, box 9, folder 3; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 5 December 1963; Carter-Knoche OH, 15-17; Richard Reston, "Katzenbach Considered for Next CIA Director," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 1965, and "The Search for Someone to Fill the Cloak," *Time*, 9 April 1965, McCone clipping file, HIC; McCone [redacted] OH, 22; *Reaching for Glory*, 266.

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⁸ Elder, "McCone as DCI (1987)," 377; Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 167; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 164; transcript of McCone meeting with Charles Tillinghast (TWA), 13 April 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 4; McCone [redacted] OH, 22-23; Andrew, 324. President Johnson offered the DCI job to Raborn in a telephone call on 6 April 1965. He told the admiral that he wanted someone whom the secretary of defense respected, who had "seasoned judgment," and who could work well with Congress. The president made it clear to Raborn, however, that the appointment was temporary, while Richard Helms—who would be promoted to DDCI—was groomed for the directorship. Helms, Johnson told Raborn, was "a young, attractive fella" who needed "some training and some seasoning" before rising to the top spot. Transcript of Johnson telephone conversation with Raborn, 6 April 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXIII, *Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy*..., 496-97. Two days later, Raborn telephoned the president and accepted the appointment.~~XX~~

⁹ John Warner, "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Members of CIA Subcommittee of House Appropriations," and "Memorandum for the Record...Meeting with Representatives Rivers and Hebert of the CIA Subcommittee of House Armed Services," 13 April 1965, McCone Papers, box 2, folder 16; McCone calendars, entries for 12-28 April 1965; McCone untitled memorandum to Raborn, 23 April 1965, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 3, folder 67.~~XX~~

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Richard Helms speaks at the farewell dinner for McCone and Carter on 26 April 1965.

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McCone met with President Johnson alone for the final time as DCI on the day of Raborn's swearing-in, 28 April 1965. McCone reiterated his belief that the president needed to receive personal intelligence briefings and not rely only on written reports, and he recommended that Raborn brief attendees of the Tuesday Lunches. Johnson agreed and indicated that he would work out some arrangement. McCone then urged the president to give to Raborn a letter like the one John Kennedy issued in January 1962 affirming the DCI's leadership of the Intelligence Community and role as the president's chief intelligence adviser. Johnson "felt this would be in order," and subsequently discussed the subject with McGeorge Bundy.¹⁰ ~~XX~~

Leaving the Oval Office, McCone joined a large CIA delegation at Raborn's installation ceremony at the White House. As President Johnson lauded his new DCI, "tears were coursing down [the admiral's] crimson cheeks and

forming tiny drops at the point of his chin," R. Jack Smith recalled. McCone's reaction to his successor's public display is unrecorded. That afternoon, the now-former DCI hosted a luncheon for USIB and the following day left for California. After President Johnson received the first briefing from Raborn, he made it clear that their relationship would not be like the one he had had with McCone. The president ended their meeting by saying in exasperation, "And, I'm sick and tired of John McCone's tugging at my shirt tails. If I want to see you, Raborn, I'll telephone you!"¹¹ ~~XX~~

A Public Retirement (U)

The limitations of Raborn's leadership soon became the stuff of corridor legend at Langley. An anonymous Washington wit summed up the Agency's recent history by observing that "Dulles ran a happy ship, McCone ran a tight ship, and Raborn runs a sinking ship." Perhaps out of fear that the admiral's substantive and managerial shortcomings would undo much of what he thought he had accomplished, McCone continually offered the DCI unsolicited advice on intelligence policy and administrative matters large and small. His business interests (as chairman of the Hendy International Company and as a member of several corporate boards) brought him to the East Coast regularly, and two or three times during his first year of retirement he came by Headquarters to counsel the reluctant Raborn. On those occasions, the Agency provided McCone with services customarily given to former directors, including a limousine and an intelligence briefing.¹² (U)

R. Jack Smith, then the DDI, was the hapless victim of McCone's hard-charging habits during one visit. Suffering from a bad cold, Raborn told Smith that he did not want to see McCone or anyone else and left the DDI to "handle the

¹⁰ McCone letter to Johnson, 26 April 1965, and McCone memorandum, "Discussion with the President alone on 28 April 1965...", *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy...*, 500-502. McCone and Johnson did not discuss the crisis in the Dominican Republic that was about to erupt. ~~XX~~

¹¹ White House press release, 28 April 1965, McCone clipping file, HIC; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 166; McCone calendars, entries for 28 and 29 April 1965; Helms, 294. ~~XX~~

¹² Andrew, 324; Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 176-77. McCone sold his interest in Hendy International in 1969. (U)

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problem." Meeting McCone at Dulles Airport, Smith said neither Raborn nor Helms was at Langley and that the car would take the former DCI downtown. Without responding, McCone directed the driver to go to Headquarters. After they arrived and had taken the elevator from the executive garage to the seventh floor, Smith tried to steer his guest to his offices, but McCone turned toward the DCI suite, and, writes Smith:

sailed into the Director's outer office at flank speed and without breaking stride opened Admiral Raborn's closed door and walked through. The Admiral sat at his desk...clutching a piece of Kleenex. Before he even sat down, McCone had already said, "Admiral, there are a couple of things I want to take up with you." I stood behind him silently indicating my helplessness. As I retreated in chagrin I met Dick Helms coming in the doorway, and my defeat was complete. As I explained to both men later, I could not have stopped John McCone from confronting Admiral Raborn that day except by a hard tackle below the knees.¹³ (U)

At other times, McCone conveyed to Raborn his thoughts on "the very serious erosion of public confidence in CIA because of unwarranted attacks which unfortunately go unanswered"; suggested opportunities for the admiral to request intelligence studies and streamline the reporting process; proposed that the DCI portraits and autographed photographs of the presidents be moved to more visible locations; and offered to help Raborn deal with a proposed investigation of CIA by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In 1966, he urged Raborn to travel to Vietnam, as he himself had twice, to get a firsthand look at the political, military, and intelligence situation there.¹⁴ (U)

The Agency retained McCone as a consultant until 1973. In 1966, he worked with CIA in responding to a request from the *New York Times* that he review a draft article criti-

cal of the Agency. He recommended that the *Times* not run the report and then proposed many editorial changes, some of which were made. According to Harrison Salisbury of the *Times*, "McCone's intervention had not weakened the series; it had reinforced it because his views had been tested and the stories rechecked and strengthened in the light of his observations." McCone also periodically offered advice to then-DCI Richard Helms. In 1967, for example, he briefed Helms on Mideast oil matters and asked him to pass on to the administration an idea for establishing a buffer zone between Egypt and Israel. Helms disagreed with the concept and presumably did not convey McCone's notion to the White House.¹⁵ ~~SECRET~~

In 1973, McCone asked CIA to terminate his consultancy after his involvement in the Agency's covert action in Chile in 1970 came under congressional scrutiny.¹⁶ In mid-1970, the US government again mobilized clandestine resources to keep the perennial socialist candidate, Salvadore Allende, from winning the Chilean presidential election. Also again, American business leaders offered corporate money to CIA for use in supporting Allende's opponents. This time the group of concerned executives and industrialists included McCone. Since 1965, he had been a member of the board of directors of International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT)—a sure target for nationalization under an Allende government because of its extensive economic and political influence in Chile. Through his contacts with Helms, McCone set in motion a series of discussions between ITT and CIA about the Chilean election. On his own initiative, McCone met with Helms several times during May and June 1970 to discuss the situation. According to Helms, McCone seemed to think the Agency could repeat its successful intervention in 1964 when he was DCI and was dissatisfied that CIA was not mounting a massive covert operation this time. McCone pressed Helms to send an Agency representative to talk with ITT's chief executive officer, Harold Geneen. In a meeting in mid-July with Will-

¹³ Smith, *The Unknown CIA*, 176–77. (U)

¹⁴ McCone letters to Raborn, 25 October 1965 and 20 January and 7 May 1966, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 3, folders 67 and 68. (U)

¹⁵ McCone personnel file no. 35335, Office of Personnel Files; White untitled memorandum to Raborn, 9 May 1966, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 4, folder 82; Helms briefing notes and letter to McCone, 21 July 1967, McCone Papers, box 11, folder 3; McCone letter to Raborn, 13 May 1966, ER Files, Job 80R01580R, box 3, folder 67; Harrison E. Salisbury, *Without Fear or Favor*, 522–26; McGeorge Bundy memorandum, "Briefing by Mr. John McCone on the Importance of Middle East Oil to the United States," 29 June 1967, *FRUS*, 1964–1968, XXXIV, *Energy Diplomacy and Global Issues*, 452–56. ~~SECRET~~

¹⁶ Sources for this paragraph and the next are: McCone-Colby correspondence, 19 June and 2 July 1973, ER Files, Job 80M01066A, box 14, folder 23; Hathaway and Smith, 84–85, 91; Richard Helms oral history interview by Robert M. Hathaway, Washington, DC, 15 June 1983, 4–5; *Church Committee Hearings, Volume 7: Covert Action*, Appendix A, "Covert Action in Chile, 1963–1973," 166–72, 205; US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, *The International Telephone and Telegraph Company and Chile, 1970–71*, 2–6, 9–10, 16; Robert Sobel, *ITT: The Management of Opportunity*, 307, 312–13; Anthony Sampson, *The Sovereign State of ITT*, 269, 276; Eileen Shanahan, "McCone Defends I.T.T. Chile Fund Idea," *New York Times*, 22 March 1973, and "McCone Says Memos on Chile Authentic," *Washington Post*, 31 March 1972, McCone clipping file, HIC. ~~SECRET~~

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iam Broe, then head of WH Division, Geneen offered to give CIA a "substantial" fund (later calculated at \$1 million) to pass along to Allende's principal opponent. Broe declined, citing the US government's prohibition against backing a specific candidate, but he encouraged ITT to provide the money directly to the campaign. Company representatives, guided by CIA advice, eventually passed approximately \$350,000 to the National Party. McCone presumably was witting of these activities. ⁽⁸⁾

At the ITT board of directors' monthly meeting in early September 1970, just after Allende won a plurality of the popular vote, Geneen told McCone privately that he would put up \$1 million of ITT's funds to support any US policy to build opposition to Allende before the Chilean legislature voted on the president in November. (Under the Chilean constitution, when no candidate won an absolute majority in the plebiscite, the Congress would select a president from the two candidates with the most votes.) McCone concurred with the idea and a few days later met with Helms and the national security adviser, Henry Kissinger—both members of the NSC's 40 Committee, successor to the Special Group and the 303 Committee—to convey ITT's offer. Kissinger said he would get back to McCone if the administration had a plan, but McCone said Kissinger never did. Later in September, as the second phase of the election drew nearer, CIA proposed a large-scale program to disrupt the Chilean economy as a way of encouraging Christian Democrats to vote against Allende or, failing that, to undermine the new government. The DDP, Thomas Karamessines, telephoned McCone to request his approval of the scheme, but McCone did not think the plan would work and so informed Geneen, who decided not to take part in it. CIA eventually spent between \$800,000 and \$1 million to influence the vote, which Allende won. ⁽⁸⁾

McCone does not appear to have had any part in subsequent US efforts to destabilize Allende's government, which

fell in a military coup in 1973. When questioned at the time by Sen. Frank Church about CIA-ITT activities toward Chile, McCone said he "would personally be very distressed" if a foreign government or corporation tried to influence a presidential election in the United States. He testified that ITT intended the money it placed in Chile during the election as economic aid, prompting incredulous senators to note how inconsequential the amount was when compared to official US assistance of \$1 billion. McCone did not persuade the legislators that ITT's intentions in Chile or its dealings with CIA were as innocuous as he claimed, but he did not incur any sanction for either his actions or his testimony.¹⁷ (U)

McCone took part in other public affairs not related to intelligence during the late 1960s and early 1970s. President Johnson had placed him on a committee studying the feasibility of a supersonic transport aircraft, and he stayed on the panel following his resignation. His business experience and contacts and his knowledge of the OXCART's development was useful to the committee's work. (The US government decided in the early 1970s, however, not to develop an SST.) After race riots broke out in Los Angeles's Watts District in the summer of 1965, McCone—a lifelong resident of California—headed a committee appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown to investigate urban violence and racial relations in the United States. The committee tried to allocate blame for the riots evenhandedly and proposed an agenda of economic and educational programs targeting urban minorities. Two years later, President Johnson appointed McCone to an 18-member committee to determine how business and labor resources could be mobilized to attack poverty in the inner cities. McCone made overtures to the new Nixon administration in 1969, and in one instance discussed PFIAB with the president. During Nixon's second term, McCone served on the general advisory committee of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.¹⁸ (U)

¹⁷ In November 1976, McCone was called to testify before a federal grand jury hearing evidence about Richard Helms's perjury before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1973. McCone wrote to then-DCI George Bush that he "had little recollection of discussions that took place...several years ago.... I was something less than the most informative witness and, at times, was concerned that the jury might think I was 'stonewalling' which was not the case." McCone letter to Bush, 18 January 1976, ER Files, Job 79M00467A, box 2, folder 21. (U)

¹⁸ McCone [redacted] OH, 20; transcripts of McCone meetings with [redacted] 1 and 13 April 1965, McCone Papers, box 9, folder 4; Robert M. Fogelson, comp., *The Los Angeles Riots*; Wallace Turner, "McCone Heads Panel or 8 to Study Riots on Coast," *New York Times*, 20 August 1965, Robert B. Semple, "U.S. Panel Named to Attack Slums," *ibid.*, 4 June 1967, Peter Hart, "Watts Commission Will Publish Findings," *ibid.*, 31 October 1965, "Nixon Taps 4 Advisers," *Oakland Tribune*, 1 October 1973, McCone clipping file, HIC; Elder memorandum to Helms, "Meeting with Mr. McCone," 26 May 1969, McCone Papers, box 11, folder 7. During the 1966 gubernatorial campaign in California, Republican candidate Ronald Reagan said that, if elected, he would put McCone in charge of a committee to investigate campus unrest at the University of California. McCone had been on the university's Board of Regents and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was concerned about student and faculty radicalism there. After he took office, Governor Reagan did not establish the committee. Lou Cannon, *Reagan*, 148; Bill Boyarsky, *Ronald Reagan: His Life and Rise to the Presidency*, 96. (U)

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Transition (U)

As the Agency's relations with Congress and reputation with the public deteriorated in the early and mid-1970s, McCone decided that CIA must retreat from some of its traditional positions on openness and oversight. The scandals surrounding the Agency had so damaged its image, he concluded, that major changes were needed to end the criticism and restore confidence in it. In 1972, he endorsed a bill to require the Agency to distribute estimates to Congress and regularly report to the House and Senate committees on foreign affairs as well as the usual oversight committees. In 1975, McCone suggested to the Rockefeller Commission that PFIAB be strengthened, that a joint congressional oversight committee be established, and that CIA's name be changed (because it "is so tainted.") Later that year, he volunteered to apprise the Pike Committee—the House of Representatives' investigative committee, chaired by Rep. Otis Pike (D-NY)—of some of the Intelligence Community's accomplishments. He told Vice President Nelson Rockefeller that "I think I'd better go talk to this man Pike. He's off the reservation." Pike replied that he was not interested in hearing about the Cuban missile crisis again and never met with McCone. In addition, McCone proposed the creation of an interagency subcommittee of the NSC that would monitor all CIA activities, not just covert action. In public testimony to a Senate committee in 1976, he repeated his call for the creation of a join congressional oversight committee.¹⁹ ~~XX~~

At the same time he was espousing these ideas, which contradicted positions he had taken as DCI, McCone defended the Agency in two widely circulated publications. His essay on "Foreign Intelligence in a Free Society" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* yearbook for 1976 explained in



McCone at the groundbreaking ceremony for the New Headquarters Building in May 1984. Also pictured are his former executive assistant, Walter Elder (l); William Raborn (c); James Schlesinger and William Colby (r). (U)

objective terms why intelligence collection and analysis "is an indispensable service for any government having even the most elementary international associations." He made the same case, with a slightly sharper pen, in a *TV Guide* article in early 1976, "Why We Need the CIA." In both pieces, he recognized that "changes must be made to extinguish...criticism [and] to restore confidence...[in] an on-going, dynamic foreign intelligence service."²⁰ (U)

McCone's participation in CIA and intelligence affairs lasted into the 1980s. He was one of the few ex-Agency officials who supported President Jimmy Carter's controversial nomination of Theodore Sorensen, John Kennedy's speechwriter, to be DCI. While a member of the NSC Executive Committee during the Cuban missile crisis, he had been particularly impressed with Sorensen's abilities. McCone served on the Citizens Advisory Committee on Cuba, which President Carter had convened after the so-called "discovery" of a Soviet army brigade in Cuba in 1979. He joined

¹⁹ Thomas B. Ross, "McCone Backs Bill to Give Congress CIA Reports," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 28 March 1972, and Reuters wire service report no. 1436, 10 October 1975, McCone clipping file, HIC; Elder untitled memorandum of McCone meeting with Rockefeller Commission staffers on 17 April 1975, OIG Files, Job 80B00910A, box 25, folder 11; Elder/ [redacted] OH, 45; McCone testimony to Senate Committee on Government Operations, 26 January 1976, *Oversight of U.S. Government Intelligence Functions: Hearings Before the Committee...*, 189 ~~XX~~

²⁰ McCone, "Foreign Intelligence in a Free Society," *Britannica Book of the Year: 1976*, 241–42; idem, "Why We Need the CIA," *TV Guide*, 10 January 1976, 6–10. McCone donated his \$500 honorarium for the *Britannica* article to the Agency's education fund. McCone letter to William Colby, 24 September 1975, ER Files, Job 80M01066A, box 1, folder 6. (U)

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CHAPTER 18

that impressive coterie of "senior statesmen"—the other members were McGeorge Bundy, Brent Scowcroft, John McCloy, Sol Linowitz, David Packard, Dean Rusk, William Rogers, Henry Kissinger, Roswell Gilpatric, George Ball, W. Averell Harriman, Nicholas Katzenbach, and James Schlesinger—in spending a day at CIA Headquarters questioning Agency officers about the nature of the supposed deployment and examining old intelligence reports. The panel concluded that the unit had been in Cuba since the missile crisis and that the Intelligence Community had lost track of it sometime during the preceding 16 years. McCone, presumably more defensive than the others about CIA's lapse, appears to have tried to implicate the Soviet Union in some sort of indiscretion and said the United States should "take steps to rectify the situation"—though he did not specify what.²¹ (U)

During the Reagan administration, McCone served on the President's Commission on Strategic Forces (also known as the Scowcroft Commission), which recommended ways to reduce American vulnerability to a first strike. In interviews for books and newspapers, he tried to set the record

straight about CIA during the contentious directorship of William Casey. (On his trips to Washington, McCone often stopped by Headquarters to see the DCI.) In 1982, the Agency gave McCone the William J. Donovan Award in recognition of his contributions to the intelligence profession and, Casey said in his speech, of McCone's service as a "citizen statesman and...citizen soldier." In 1987, President Reagan presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor the US government can bestow on private citizens. The following year, McCone was named honorary chairman of the advisory board of the National Intelligence Study Center, a private information clearinghouse for intelligence scholars. He also was a trustee of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California during this period.²² (U)

By the end of the decade, McCone's health was failing. On 14 February 1991 at the age of 89, he died of a heart attack at "Blue Stars," his home in Pebble Beach, California, overlooking Carmel Bay. He was buried nearby at the Carmel Mission.²³ (U)

²¹ Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, 348, n. 9; Clifford, 637–38; Prados, *Keepers of the Keys*, 405; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977–1981*, 350–52. (U)

²² Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War*, 115; Kevin Howe, "Ex-CIA Boss McCone, Now Retired, Keeps His Eye on the Spy Business," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, 27 May 1982, "Former Chief of C.I.A. Honored by O.S.S. Members," *New York Times*, 22 May 1982, and "10 to Receive Freedom Medal," *USA Today*, 23 June 1987, McCone clipping file, HIC; Herbert E. Meyer, comp., *Scouting the Future: The Public Speeches of William J. Casey*, 270–71; *CIRA Newsletter* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 34–35; *Foreign Intelligence Literary Scene* 8, no. 2 (1989): 1. (U)

²³ Glenn Fowler, "John A. McCone, Head of C.I.A. in Cuban Missile Crisis, Dies at 89," *New York Times*, 16 February 1991: sec. I, 15; Myrna Oliver, "John A. McCone, 89; Helped Establish CIA," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 February 1991: A34. (U)

EPILOGUE

A DCI for His Times (U)

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., historian and adviser to President John F. Kennedy, wrote the first assessment of John McCone as DCI in early 1965, before McCone resigned. The evaluation holds up well, almost 40 years later. McCone, Schlesinger concluded, was a “cautious, realistic, and self-effacing” director who

repaired morale within the Agency, instituted measures to keep the CIA and himself out of the newspapers...restored its relations with the State Department and the Congress, if not altogether with the Department of Defense...declin[ed] to allow his own views to prejudice the intelligence estimates...[and] showed a fair-mindedness which shamed some of us who had objected to his appointment.

Just after McCone died in 1991, then-DCI William Webster described the sixth director as “sharp, tough, and demanding...a highly effective and widely respected leader.” In 2004, then-acting DCI John McLaughlin—noting similarities between the straits CIA found itself in after the Bay of Pigs debacle and the intelligence controversies of Operation Iraqi Freedom—described the way McCone handled himself inside what President Kennedy called the “bull’s eye:”

He would lead an Agency that was, for the first time in its history, under intense scrutiny and criticism.... If McCone was at all uneasy about the challenges before him, he did not let it show. With the confidence and decisiveness of an experienced manager, he learned what he needed to know—and he learned it fast.... He was a leader suited for a tough business in a tough time.¹ (U)

McCone was the right DCI for the times—the manager and leader CIA needed desperately in the early 1960s, when the Agency faced an uncertain future in the wake of the Bay of Pigs humiliation. A president other than Kennedy may well have decided to put a submissive bureaucrat in charge with orders to downsize or dismantle it; even Kennedy, the dynamic cold warrior, briefly thought of doing so. He could not envi-

sion winning the Cold War without CIA, however, and needed a DCI like McCone to make sure the administration’s clandestine arsenal was used as effectively as possible. (U)

McCone fulfilled the Kennedy administration’s expectations and more than ably completed the missions he was assigned. He brought his lengthy experience in business and government, his keen intellect, his political sophistication, and his forceful personality to bear on CIA’s manifold administrative and political problems. He restored balance to the Agency’s activities by reemphasizing its preeminent missions—collecting secret foreign intelligence and providing strategic warning and analysis to US policymakers—and keeping close watch over CA operations. Except for minor imbroglios over covert actions and information disclosures with Congress and the media, he kept CIA out of public controversy. When McCone left Langley 42 months after his appointment, the Agency and the Intelligence Community were in far better shape to conduct their business than when he arrived. (U)

Like Walter Bedell Smith, McCone was an archetype of the “manager-reformer/outsider” DCI, and he showed that a career as a Washington insider is not essential to running the community effectively. There are, of course, limits to how far a DCI can live apart from the capital scene and still be successful. James Schlesinger and Stansfield Turner demonstrated that point, and they did not help themselves with their arrogance and hostility toward clandestine operations. A DCI who, like McCone, comes from beyond Washington determined to make changes, has political skills and connections, appreciates the community’s bureaucratic culture, and enjoys the support of the president, can accomplish much in making the intelligence services major contributors to American foreign policy. (U)

The watchwords of McCone’s directorship were productivity, efficiency, and accountability. These he tried to achieve through centralization and the appointment of trusted and experienced subordinates. He eschewed management systems and models, and he did not proliferate sub-bureaucracies. He convened working groups and special

¹ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 429; “Statement from Judge William H. Webster on John McCone,” 15 February 1991, HS Files, Job 03-01742R, box 6, folder 9; “A/DCI McLaughlin Congratulates New SIS Officers,” *What’s News*, no. 1325, 3 August 2004. (U)

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EPILOGUE

panels to address specific issues but disbanded them after they finished their assignments. McCone thought that intramural competition—which he distinguished from offices' efforts to complement each other's activities—was corrosive, especially at lower levels. He wanted lines of authority, responsibility, and function clearly defined from the top down. Striving to be a true D/CIA, McCone brought more authority into the Office of the DCI and put trustworthy and knowledgeable insiders in charge of the key operations and directorates. They kept him fully informed through morning staff meetings and the reenergized DCI Executive Committee. (U)

McCone accomplished most of the internal managerial goals he set for himself. Despite his reputation as a hard-headed executive, he played the bureaucratic game adeptly, knowing that as an outsider he could not run CIA by seventh floor edict. After 30 years in the private sector and the US government, he knew the difference between acting decisively and acting precipitously. Cognizant of the cultural differences within the Agency, he did not—as did Stansfield Turner and John Deutch—bring in a cadre of former associates to populate the upper echelon, nor did he try to run a unique government organization by business school paradigms. He realized that CIA had some singular specialties and let the career experts practice them. (U)

Externally, McCone had more difficulty. Probably his biggest misstep in community affairs was his initial handling of the dispute with the Department of Defense over running NRO. The controversy was clear evidence that the DCI—then wielding command authority over only one-sixth of the community's resources—did not direct something called "central intelligence." When adjustments of the traditional CIA-Pentagon joint management of NRO became necessary, McCone negotiated away too much administrative and budgetary authority to the Pentagon, wrongly counting on personal relationships to offset the bureaucratic disadvantage in which he left CIA. He soon entered an interagency slugfest to regain the ground he had surrendered, in an effort that took up more of his time than any issue except Vietnam. (U)

Two of McCone's signal accomplishments as DCI came in the areas of science and technology and analysis. With his engineering background and previous work at the Pentagon and the AEC, he was almost ideally equipped to lead the community early in a revolution in technical intelligence. McCone's centralization of CIA's scientific and technologi-

cal activities into a new directorate enabled him to mobilize Agency resources more efficiently and added to CIA's influence in this increasingly important aspect of the community's work. He not only understood many of the design intricacies of the new overhead systems, but he knew enough about the politics of the military-industrial complex to be able to preserve for CIA a major role in the National Reconnaissance Program. A less combative or less knowledgeable DCI almost certainly would have been far less effective at protecting the Agency's interests in the new era of technical collection—arguably the community's most vital contribution to Cold War intelligence. (U)

McCone also raised the prominence of intelligence analysis in the national security decisionmaking process. For intelligence analyses to be influential—let alone be read at all—they had to answer the questions the policymakers were asking. It was not enough to tell them what CIA thought was important. McCone regarded relevance, accuracy, objectivity, and timeliness as the keys to making intelligence analysis worthwhile. Except for the Vietnam special estimate in 1963, he kept his policy role from influencing his supervision of the community's analytic efforts. He was an empiricist who could be, and many times was, argued out of a judgment by facts or compelling logic. To him, the estimative process existed to inform policymakers, not to press a case or plead a cause. (U)

McCone did not win all his bureaucratic fights, but he established the authority of the DCI as the US government's national intelligence officer. He came to Langley with a "vision" of how the community should be run and worked assiduously to bring it to fruition. When he prevailed, he did so largely by building respect for himself and his ideas across organizational lines, even if he was often hard to work with. His reputation for integrity and candor served him well in interdepartmental and congressional settings; few officials or legislators ever accused him of being devious or playing political games. From McCone's time on, the DCI would be regarded (even if at times only formalistically) as director of central intelligence, not just director of CIA. Later DCIs—for reasons of personality or politics—were more passive in carrying out their duties or served under presidents who were indifferent or hostile to CIA. Nonetheless, McCone ensured that when a president who cared about intelligence took office and appointed an activist DCI, the Agency and the community would be well prepared to serve both. (U)

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In the early 21st century debate over intelligence reform, many of McCone's views would resonate. A "McCone perspective" would involve giving *more* power to the DCI—making the position a true director of the Intelligence Community, with authority over the programs, budgets, and personnel of *all* intelligence agencies, and answerable to the president. McCone attempted to make himself a "chairman of the board" of "Intelligence, Inc." in a way that resembles current proposals to establish a national intelligence director with the statutory authority to coordinate all activities of community "operating companies" such as CIA, NSA, and NRO. McCone most likely would have regarded that reform as far more preferable to creation of large interagency centers combining operations and analysis on specific issues or decentralization of authority over intelligence affairs to purely civilian and military departments under their own directors reporting to cabinet secretaries. McCone would also have endorsed giving the DCI command authority over "national" or "strategic" intelligence agencies, leaving "departmental" and "tactical" components—INR, DIA, and the other military and civilian intelligence offices—under their respective cabinet secretaries. (U)

At the same time that McCone demonstrated the importance of being close to the White House, he revealed the risks of trying *too* hard to be close. As Richard Helms—a very different type of DCI—observed,

Each President has to be dealt with by a Director according to his personality and according to his way of doing business.... Every President is going to do his business the way he wants to do it. You say, well, he should discipline himself, but they never do. They do it exactly the way they want to do it. Even if you convince them that they ought to do it differently, they'll never do it for more than twice differently, and then they go back to the way they wanted to do it before.... The notion that a Director should constantly see[,] and be in the presence of[,] the President is *not* necessarily true. As a matter of fact, he can become an irritant.... You either adjust your production to the man you have in the office or you're going to miss the train.²

McCone came on too strong with Lyndon Johnson in the early weeks of their relationship. With uncharacteristic obtuseness, he failed to adapt his approach to suit the new president's preferences. Then he compounded his error by constantly caviling about the administration's policy in Vietnam. In short, McCone almost argued himself out of a job. His disputatiousness and unconcealed dissatisfaction helped bring on the appointment of William Raborn, who knew little about foreign affairs and was chosen mostly because he would not bother the president. (U)

Almost as important for an institution's history are the features of a leader's style that his successors choose *not* to emulate. Richard Helms, for one, learned by McCone's negative example. During his seven-year directorship, he consciously fashioned his management approach to reduce the DCI's policy profile and to avoid bureaucratic battles. Unlike McCone, Helms did not believe the DCI could or should "wear two hats" and that if any director was bold enough, as McCone was, to take on the secretary of defense—by many measures the second most powerful official in Washington after the president—he was sure to lose. Instead, the DCI's role in this more quiescent conception is mainly to "keep the game honest"—to "be at the table" at the pleasure of the president with the facts and objective analysis—while avoiding pointless and self-defeating skirmishes over turf and prestige and staying out of policy discussions as much as possible.³ (U)

Most of McCone's followers adopted Helms's approach, but neither style alone has guaranteed success. The DCI's standing and accomplishments have depended substantially on whether the president—because of ideology, politics, or something else—is suspicious of or uninterested in intelligence and whether the national security adviser functions as the president's chief intelligence officer (as did Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski). Most DCIs have been unable to influence those variables. On occasion, however, with the right conjunction of world events, personalities, and political needs, a DCI has reached the top of the national security apparatus. John McCone occupied such a place. (U)

² Helms, OH, 34–36. ~~SECRET~~

³ See David Robarge, "Richard Helms: The Intelligence Professional Personified," *Studies* 46, no. 4 (2002): 35–43. (U)

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Appendix on Sources

This appendix contains annotated citations for key sources on major topics discussed in the book. (U)

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The most comprehensive Web site on intelligence is Loyola University's homepage on "Strategic Intelligence"; its address is www.loyola.edu/dept/politics/intel.html. (U)

Helpful surveys of the literature of intelligence are:

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- Raymond L. Garthoff, "Foreign Intelligence and the Historiography of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 21–56;
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- Roger Hilsman, "On Intelligence," *Armed Forces and Society* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1981): 129–43;
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- Mark M. Lowenthal, "The Intelligence Library: Quantity vs. Quality," *Intelligence and National Security* 2, no. 2 (April 1987): 368–73;
- Neal H. Petersen, "Intelligence Literature of the Cold War," *Studies in Intelligence* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 63–72;
- Marc B. Powe, "The History of American Military Intelligence: A Review of Selected Literature," *Military Affairs* 39, no. 3 (October 1975): 142–45;
- Bradley F. Smith, "An Idiosyncratic View of Where We Stand on the History of American Intelligence in the Early Post-1945 Era," *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 4 (October 1988): 111–23. (U)

~~SECRET~~*Appendix on Sources*

For those who prefer visual media, espionage, covert action, and counterintelligence receive regular treatment on American and British television. US cable networks such as the History Channel, the Learning Channel, and the Discovery Channel have broadcast numerous documentaries on intelligence that include discussions of some DCIs. Some of the programs are fairly breathless in tone, but others are solid in substance. In 1999, the British Broadcasting Company produced an excellent series called *The Spying Game* that handled several complicated intelligence operations with sophistication and insight. An earlier BBC effort, a 1992 serialization of John Ranelagh's sweeping history of CIA, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), was equally good. (U)

Directors of Central Intelligence (U)

As indicated in the introduction, the literature on the DCIs is extensive. Allen Dulles (DCI during 1953–61) has received more attention in print—including two full-length biographies and an extensive, once-classified, study of his directorship—than any other DCI. See especially:

- H.W. Brands Jr., "Allen Dulles and the Overthrow of Clausewitz," in Brands, *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 48–68;
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- James Srodes, *Allen Dulles: Master of Spies* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1999).

Dulles provided his own reflections on Cold War operations and analysis in *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). (U)

After Dulles, William Casey (1981–87) and Richard Helms (1966–73) have been written about more comprehensively than the other DCIs. Casey has been the subject of two books—Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (New York: Viking Press, 1990), and Bob Woodward, *VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981–1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987)—and numerous articles, most relating to the Iran-Contra affair and covert actions of the Reagan administration. A perceptive analysis of Casey's leadership is Joseph Lelyveld, "The Director: Running the CIA," *New York Times Magazine*, 20 January 1985: 16–28, 50–51. Casey's denouement is recounted in James McCullough, "Personal Reflections on Bill Casey's Last Month at CIA," *Studies in Intelligence* 39, no. 5 (1996): 75–91; and David Halevy and Neil C. Livingstone, "The Last Days of Bill Casey," *Washingtonian* 23, no. 3 (December 1987): 174–77, 238–45. (U)

One of the most insightful books about CIA, Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), is more a history of the Agency than a biography of Helms. His directorship is covered a bit episodically in a classified study by Robert M. Hathaway and Russell Jack Smith, *Richard Helms As Director of Central Intelligence, 1966–1973* (Washington, DC: CIA History Staff, 1993). See also David Robarge, "Richard Helms: The Intelligence Professional Personified," *Studies in Intelligence* 46, no. 4 (2002): 35–43; and Thomas N. Bethell, "The Spy Who Went Out in the Cold: The Problem of Choosing Wars Wisely," *Washington Monthly* 12, no. 3 (March 1980): 28–41. Helms wrote a discreet memoir (with William Hood), *A Look Over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003). ~~XX~~

Scholarship specifically on the remaining DCIs is not substantial. (Titles about John McCone are discussed in the Introduction, and accounts of the DCIs in more general works about CIA are not included here.) The early directors—Sidney Souers (1946), Hoyt Vandenberg (1946–47),

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Roscoe Hillenkoetter (1947–50), and Walter Bedell Smith (1950–53)—are discussed in:

- Arthur Darling, *The Central Agency: An Instrument of Government to 1950* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990);
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Account of America’s Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989). ~~SECRET~~

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- Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "One Hell of a Gamble": *Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 142–48, 156–58;
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- Gus Russo, *Live By the Sword: The Secret War Against Castro and the Death of JFK* (Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 1998), chap. 2;
- Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), 474–80;
- Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), chap. 20.

Most of these works also cover the Kennedy administration's post-MONGOOSE covert actions against Cuba. (U)

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Southeast Asia (U)

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Some of the later literature on the war is reviewed in Gary R. Hess, "The Unending Debate: Historians and the Vietnam War," *Diplomatic History* 18, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 239–64. (U)

US Policy toward the "Two Chinas" (U)

Good overviews of US policy toward the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, as it affected McCone's tenure, are:

- Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 187–91;
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Key policy documents are in the Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Volume XXII, Northeast Asia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996); idem, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXX, China* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998); and idem, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Volumes XXIII/XXIV, Northeast Asia, Laos: Microfiche Supplement* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1997). Dean Rusk records Kennedy's domestic political calculus of China policy in his memoir *As I Saw It* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 282–84. (U)

The Kennedy Assassination (U)

It is a historiographical oddity that an event of such *Zeitgeist*-altering proportions as the Kennedy assassination has received so little rigorous attention from academics. Instead, in an intellectual corollary to Gresham's Law, bad scholarship has driven out the good and even the mediocre. Journalists of assorted reputations, legal advocates, sensationalizers, political extremists, and so-called "independent researchers" (i.e., buffs and freelancers) preempted the field from historians as the assassination became, in historian Christopher Lasch's apt phrase, "a rich field for the unchecked play of fantasy." (Lasch, "The Life of Kennedy's Death," *Harper's Magazine*, October 1983: 32.) One of the few scholarly treatments of the killing itself is Michael L. Kurtz, *Crime of the Century: The Kennedy Assassination from*

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a *Historian's Perspective* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982). The conspiracist literature, in contrast, is voluminous, numbering over 2,000 books and thousands of articles and tracts that range enormously in reliability. Useful reference works about this corpus are:

- Anthony Frewin, comp., *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: An Annotated Film, TV, and Videography, 1963–1992* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993);
- James N. Giglio, comp., *John F. Kennedy: A Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 335–53;
- DeLloyd J. Guth and David R. Wrono, comps., *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: A Comprehensive Historical and Legal Bibliography, 1963–1979* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980). (U)

For an early assessment of the assassination literature that still holds up, see Calvin Trillin, "The Buffs," *New Yorker* 43, 10 June 1967: 41–71. A more recent analysis is Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 105–48. Barbie Zelizer, *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) is an interesting examination of how journalists' "first draft of history," and their subsequent reworkings of it, have shaped what we "know" about the assassination. (U)

Recent exemplars of the principal plot theories, with the alleged perpetrators discernible from the titles, are:

- G. Robert Blakey and Richard Billings, *Fatal Hour: The Assassination of President Kennedy by Organized Crime* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1992);
- L. Fletcher Prouty, *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1992);
- William W. Turner and Warren Hinckle, *Deadly Secrets: The CIA-Mafia War Against Castro and the Assassination of J.F.K.* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992). (U)

John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1993); Gaeton Fonzi, *The Last Investigation* (New York: Thunder Mouth's Press, 1993); and Philip H. Melanson, *Spy Saga: Lee Harvey Oswald and US Intelligence* (New York: Praeger, 1990), try to demonstrate that Oswald was an operative for CIA and/or the KGB. Many other books with mild to ardent conspiracist perspectives have been published during the past 10 years. (U)

The most thorough open source accounts of Yuri Nosenko's defection and treatment are:

- Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-War Defectors* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), chap. 12;
- Edward Jay Epstein, *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 3–50, 257–74;
- John Limond Hart, *The CIA's Russians* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), chap. 3;
- Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton: The CIA's Master Spy Hunter* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1991), chaps. 12–13;
- David Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 153–78. (U)

In *Legend*, Epstein posited the intriguing but unsubstantiated theory that the Soviets recruited Oswald when he was a Marine Corps radar operator at Atsugi Airbase in Japan to steal secrets about the U-2, which flew missions from that installation. After Oswald returned from the Soviet Union to the United States, the Soviets constructed a legend of him as a disillusioned defector to explain why he was in Russia and to conceal his intelligence activities. The Soviets never intended for him to kill John Kennedy, but when he did, they dispatched Nosenko as a false defector to corroborate the legend and, by inference, exonerate the KGB. Nosenko's bona fides, in turn, would be reinforced by another Soviet disinformation agent, [redacted] who had volunteered himself to the FBI two years earlier in New York City but remained under Soviet control. The objective of these tactics was to have Nosenko testify before the Warren Commission that the KGB files he had seen showed that Oswald never had any connection with Soviet intelligence. Epstein elaborates on elements of his interpretation in "The War of the Moles: An Interview with Edward Jay Epstein," *New York*, 27 February 1978: 28–38. *Legend* and Martin's *Wilderness of Mirrors* represented the two sides of the public debate over Nosenko that started in the late 1970s when Agency and Bureau officers began telling their anonymous versions of the still-officially-secret story. Martin's reading of the Nosenko affair deals much less with the assassination and, based heavily on unattributed interviews with James Angleton's opponents in CIA and the FBI, is far more critical of the Agency's long-time CI chief and its handling of Nosenko, Golitsyn, and counterintelligence in general. (U)

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Several books on the Nosenko-Golitsyn controversy are reviewed in Cleveland C. Cram, *Of Moles and Molehunters: A Review of Counterintelligence Literature, 1977-92*, CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence Monograph CSI 93-002 (October 1993). Nosenko's knowledge of Oswald is well summarized in Gerald Posner, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK* (New York: Random House, 1993), 46-56. CIA officer Richards J. Heuer Jr. incisively examines the flaws in the analysis of Nosenko's case in "Nosenko: Five Paths to Judgment," *Studies in Intelligence* 31, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 71-101, declassified and printed in H. Bradford Westerfield, ed., *Inside CIA's Private World: Declassified Articles from the Agency's Internal Journal, 1955-1992* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 379-414. The allegation that Angleton ordered Nosenko's incarceration has been disproved in Samuel Halpern and Hayden Peake, "Did Angleton Jail Nosenko?," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 451-64. A recent analysis of the Nosenko case, and Angleton's approach to CI generally, is David Robarge, "Moles, Defectors, and Deceptions: James Angleton and CIA Counterintelligence," *Journal of Intelligence History* 3, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 21-49. (U)

Latin America and the Johnson Administration (U)

On Johnson, Cuba, and Latin America generally during McCone's directorship, see:

- Vaughn D. Bornet, *The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1983), 172-74;
- H.W. Brands, *The Wages of Globalism: Lyndon Johnson and the Limits of American Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30-61;
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- Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 64-70;
- Walter LaFeber, "Thomas C. Mann and the Devolution of Latin American Policy: From the Good Neighbor to Military Intervention," in Thomas J. McCormick and Walter LaFeber, eds., *Behind the Throne: Servants of Power to Imperial Presidents* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 166-203;
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- Thomas G. Paterson, *Confronting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994);
- Joseph S. Tulchin, "The Promise of Progress: U.S. Relations with Latin America during the Administration of Lyndon B. Johnson," in Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf, eds., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 218-22;
- William O. Walker III, "The Johnson Administration and Cuba," in H.W. Brands, ed., *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), chap. 4;
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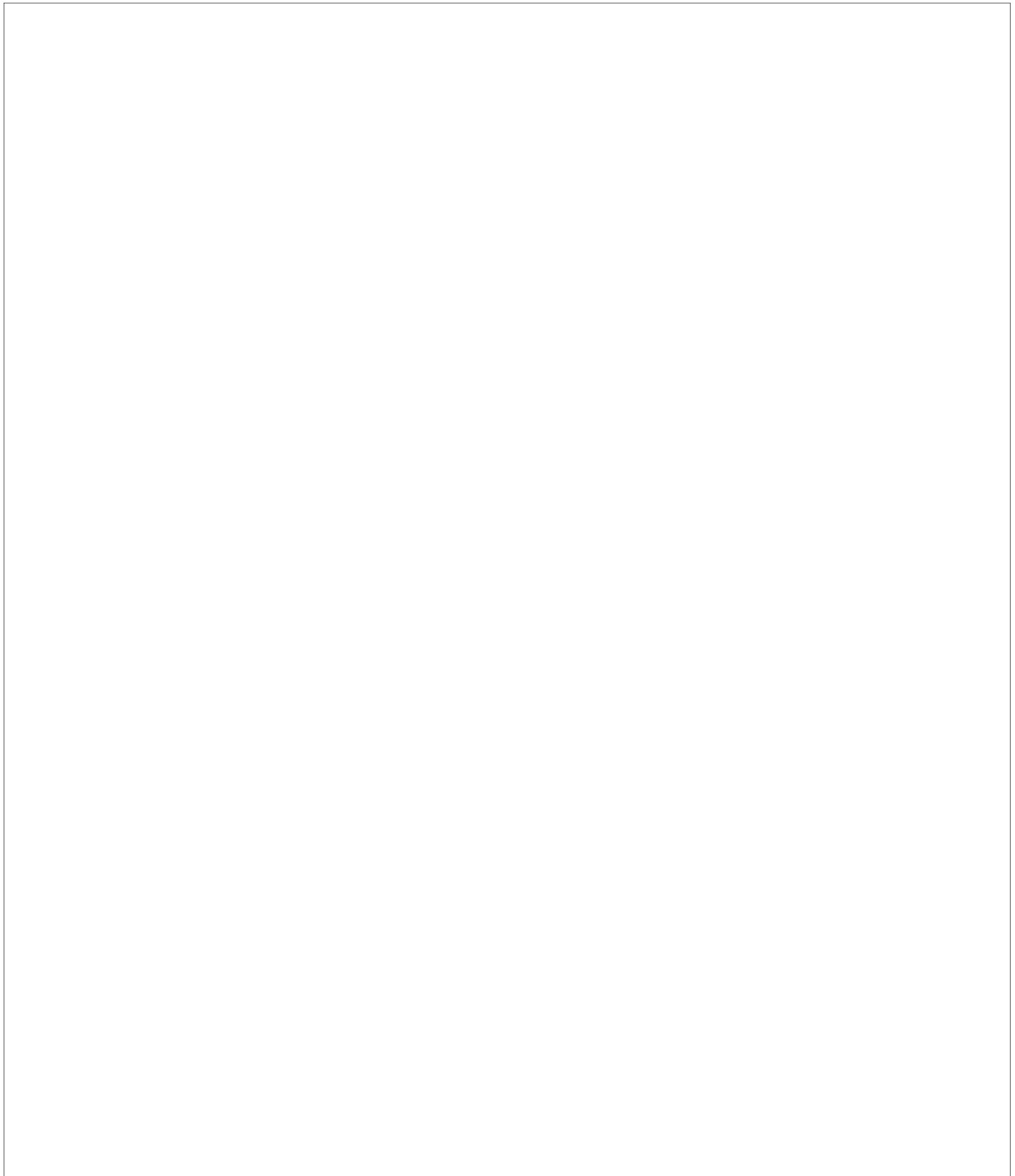
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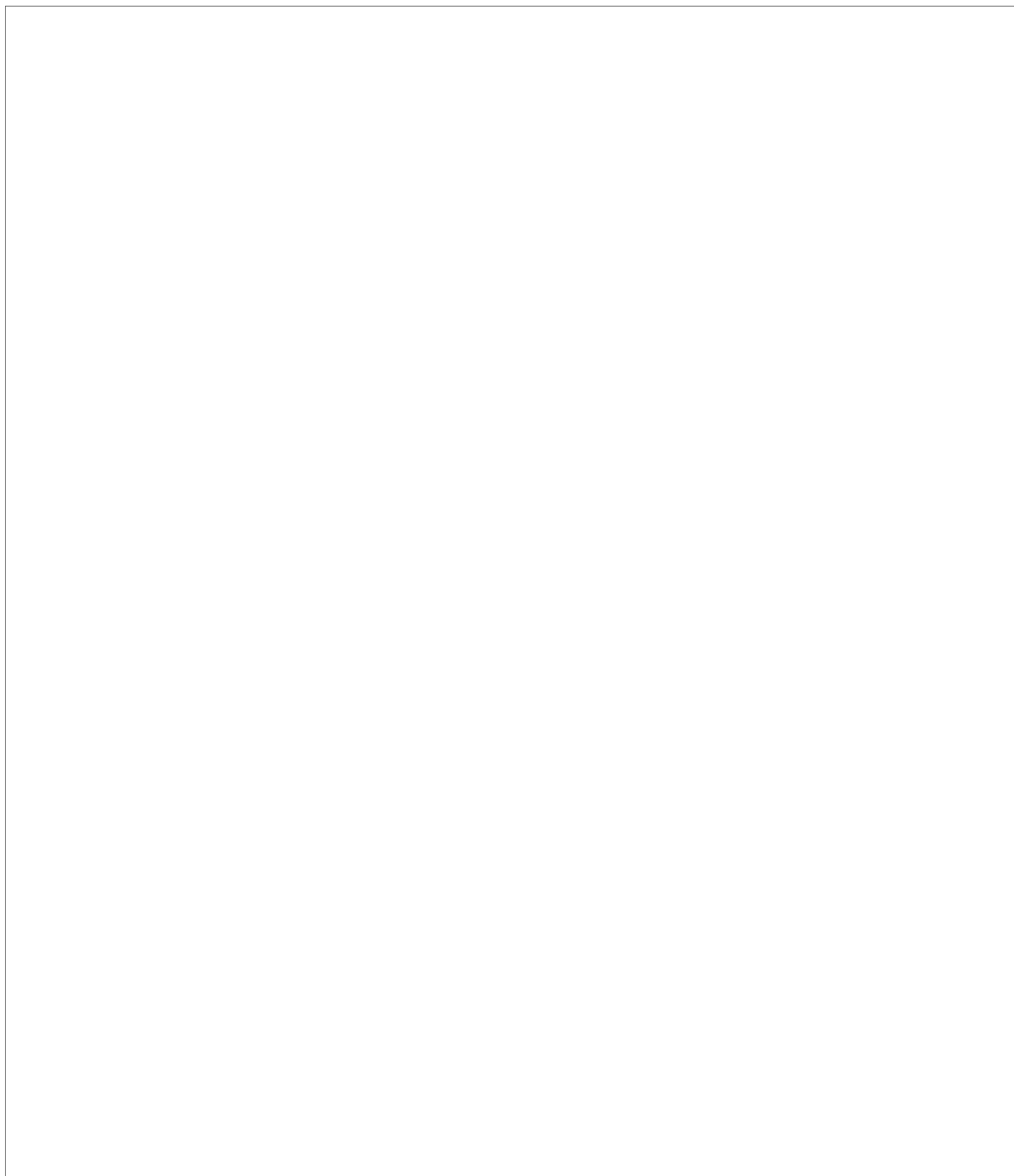
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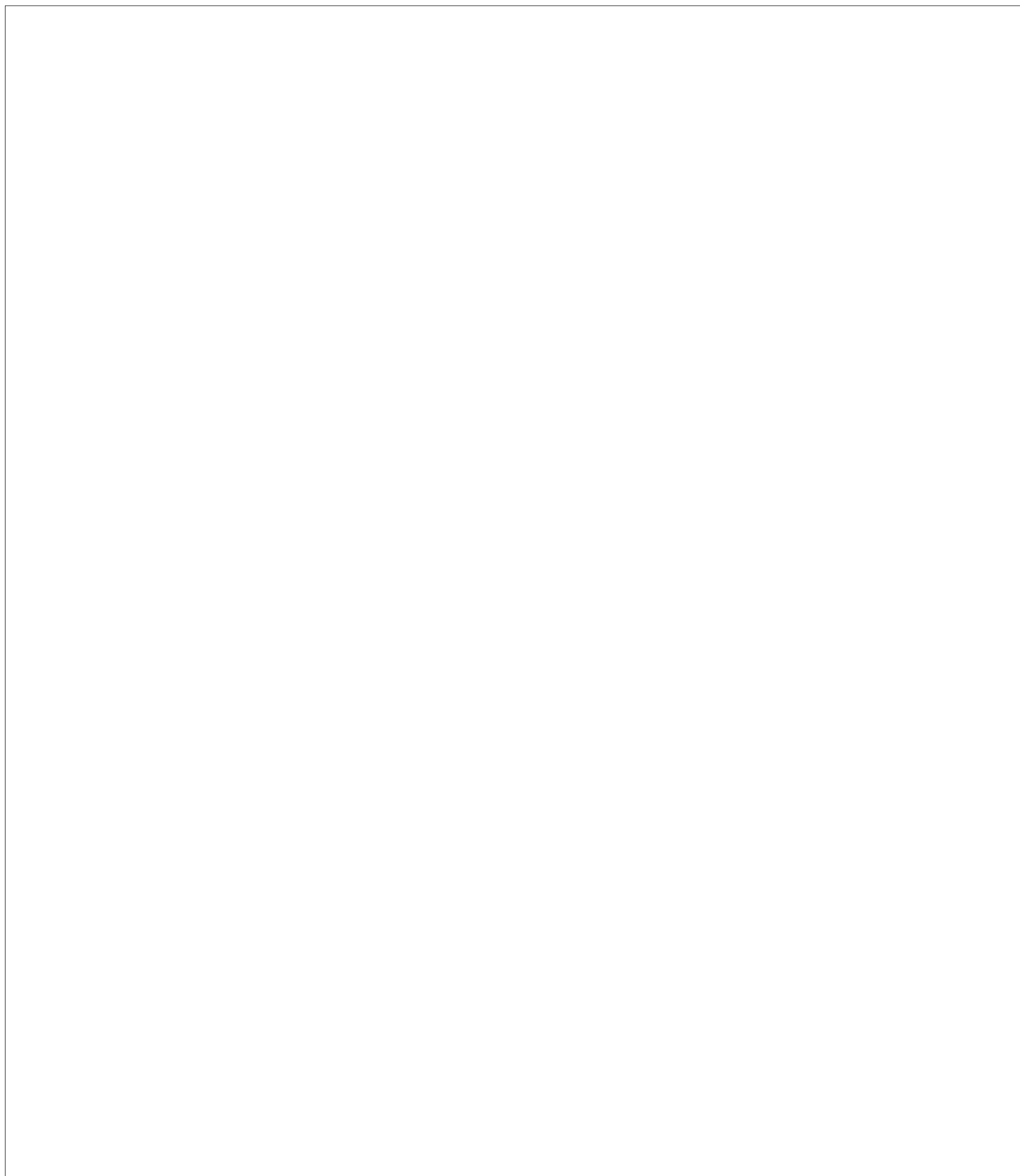
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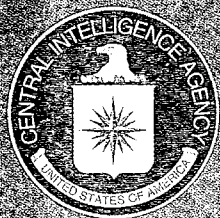
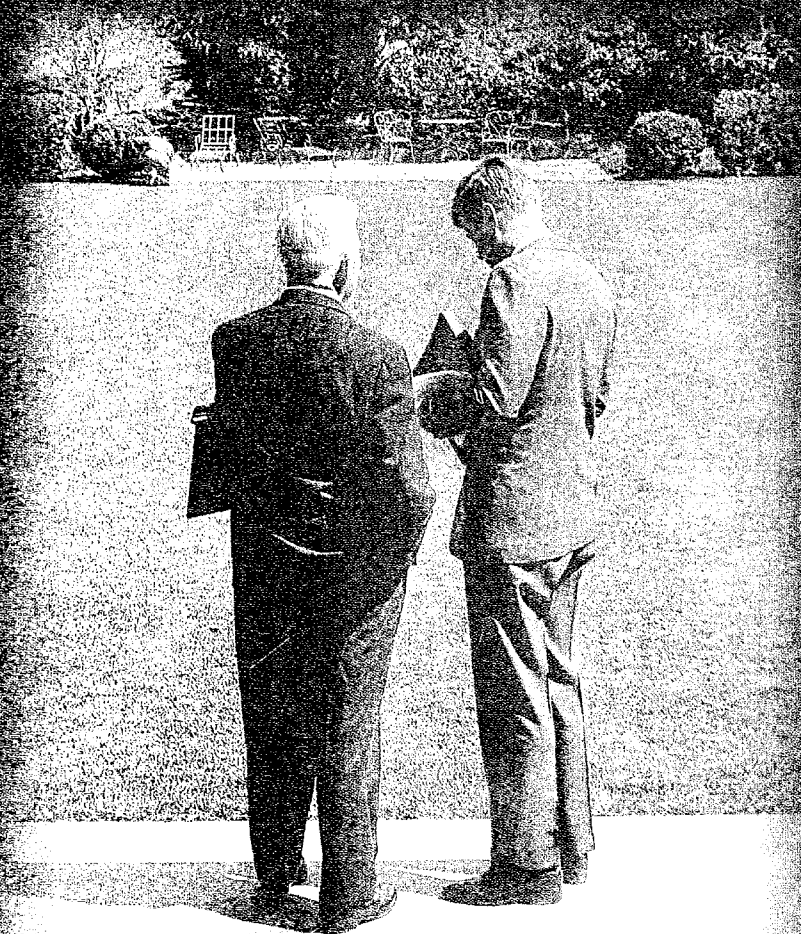
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